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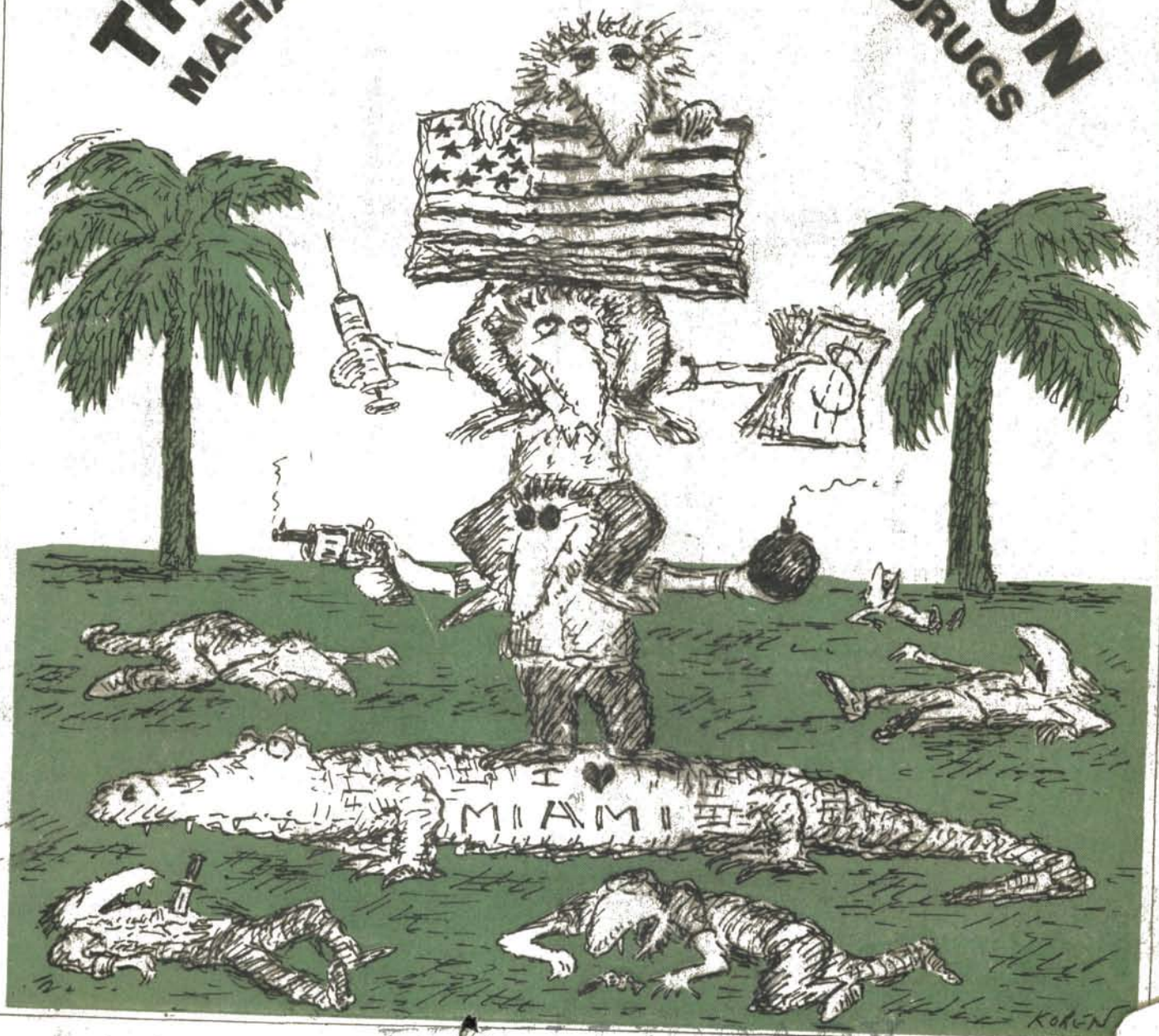

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LETTERS.

STORROW REMEMBERED

San Diego; New Milford, Conn.

Those who worked with James J. Storrow Jr., whether briefly or for the decade of his stay at *The Nation*, appreciate the tribute paid to him in the editorial pages of the January 28 issue. However much he contributed to the magazine, he gave even more to his associates. No boss was ever less bossy or more generous and considerate. Issues could arouse him to formidable anger, never people. James and his wife, Linda, associate publisher and for a time the magazine's U.N. correspondent, not only upheld *The Nation*'s traditions but represented the very best that civilized America has to offer.

Marion Hess
Victor H. Bernstein

DOE REDUX

Washington

How can Arthur Caplan ["Is It a Life?" *The Nation*, Jan. 21] say the Baby Jane Doe case is not an example of discrimination against the handicapped, when it is her physical and mental liabilities that have turned her parents against her? Caplan excuses this fundamental concern by saying the "question is whether medical treatment would be successful or would simply prolong the child's suffering." As Nat Hentoff uncovered in his courageous investigation of Baby Jane Doe's plight, some of her parents' consultants and many media accounts have overstated the severity of her condition. The more informed question is whether those who desire to give Baby Jane a chance for a longer life and the pursuit of happiness should be allowed to do so.

Caplan chooses instead to throw Baby Jane Doe on the trash heap of malignant life, and echo the court's ruling that the parents have a legitimate moral and legal stranglehold on the deserted child. But what forms the basis of the court's ruling? That Baby Jane Doe has not been neglected and is indeed still receiving "treatment." The Orwellian tones are heavy.

If right-to-lifers, Nat Hentoff and other civil libertarians choose to argue from reason rather than ideology that a neglected child with a good chance for a happy life should be able to receive the care of loving guardians, they are erring on the side of humanity, however imperfect. In this instance, it is the parents, the government and bioethics experts like Arthur Caplan who have determined that life begins and ends at birth.

Alexander Reyes

CAPLAN REPLIES

Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y.

Like so many other "defenders" of Baby Jane Doe's rights, Reyes is conceptually and morally confused. No one, including myself, would defend discrimination in the treatment of this baby. The issue in the case is not the same as it would be if the child had Down's syndrome or some other handicap. It is whether any form of treatment would benefit the child given her desperate medical problems. Thus, the question is not one of discrimination but one of the efficacy of treatment.

I agree that outside review is sometimes appropriate with respect to neonatal treatment decisions. I do not agree that quality of life considerations are irrelevant in such reviews. Unless committees, courts or other reviewers have the option of weighing the quality of life in their deliberations, then outside review is merely a smokescreen for forcing treatments on every child and family.

Arthur Caplan

CARTOON CHARACTERS

New York City

Contrary to the assertion of Robert E. Manning, S.J. ["Letters," Jan. 21], *The Nation* owes no apologies to those whose "religious sensibilities" might have been offended by Edward Sorel's pointed editorial cartoon ["Vatican Issues Sex Guidelines," Dec. 17]. Perhaps Father Manning ought to consider how offensive we "secular socialists" find certain of his church's dogmas and the attempts to impose its precepts not only on its members but also on those who do not belong. I'm referring, of course, to the Catholic Church's prominent role in the misnamed pro-life movement, a crusade the church practically invented. According to Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont, himself a Catholic, a "de facto political alliance" exists between the church and the New Right, with the church-initiated anti-choice movement providing the basis for this accord. Leahy also says the church's efforts to deny women reproductive rights have made that institution "a stalking horse for the right." And what of the Catholic Church's adamant refusal to grant more than second-class citizenship to the women in its ranks? I realize that this position is not strictly a matter of religious dogma, but no doubt Father Manning's sensibilities would be bruised were secular socialists to criticize the institutionalized sexism of his church.

The Catholic Church's treatment of its gay and lesbian members is also a scandal. Pope John Paul II's recent nonsense about homosexuality being a social maladaptation was preceded by two events of which *Nation* readers may be unaware. Last year the Pope dispatched James Hickey, Archbishop of Washington, D.C., to make an "apostolic visitation" (read, attempt at intimidation) to Seattle Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen. Hunthausen is apparently in disfavor with the Vatican and with right-wing Catholics in his archdiocese because he allowed members of Dignity, an organization of gay Catholics, to meet at the Seattle cathedral. Hickey has also attempted to wreck New Ways Ministry, a respected ministry for gay and lesbian Catholics. Hickey has forced out one of the ministry's directors, the Rev. Robert Nugent, and is attempting to do the same to another director, Sister Jeanne Grammick. Their offense? They didn't sufficiently stress to gay Catholics the traditional teaching that homosexual expression is "sinful." And in New York City, the archdiocese has been the most consistent and outspoken foe of civil rights protections for gays and lesbians.

Shall I depart for a moment from the subject of the Catholic Church's absurd, unscientific and reactionary sexual pronouncements and policies and briefly raise two other issues: namely, the Pope's crazy relationship with Opus Dei, the bizarre, right-wing cult within the church, and the anti-communism that prompted the Reagan Administration to grant the Vatican diplomatic recognition. Yes, there are progressive currents in the grass-roots church, here and abroad, and the American hierarchy deserves commendation for its opposition to nuclear war and to Reagan's Central America policies. But Manning's claim that socialists should recognize that "some of their staunchest political allies come from within the Roman Catholic community" is disingenuous. The institutional church's sexism, homophobia and hidebound cultural conservatism have no place in a socialist movement worthy of the name, and Father Manning would be better off making noise about those retrograde tendencies than advising readers to boycott *The Nation* because he was offended by a cartoon.

George DeStefano

COHEN: 'A THIRD WAY'

Stanford, Calif.

A note of appreciation for Stephen F. Cohen's "Sovieticus" column. At a time when true believers in the anti-Communist gospel square off against apologists for the "socialist homeland," Cohen eloquently provides a third way. His rationally argued, deeply informed columns allow us to see the Soviet Union for what it is: a society in which people of immense spirit and talent are squelched by authoritarian rules and rulers willing and able to match the insane militarism of Reagan and company.

Cohen's paragraphs match the wisdom of a whole library of cold war Kremlinologists and their counterparts in Moscow. By the way, *Nation* readers who want to understand how the Soviet dream went awry should read Cohen's *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution* (Oxford University Press).

Michael Kazin

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EDITORIALS.

About Cockburn...

This week Alexander Cockburn begins a biweekly column on the press called "Beat the Devil" (see page 184). Cockburn, who has been the country's most insistent and insightful press critic since he arrived from England and started beating the media demons eleven years ago, recently caused more controversy than usual. For accepting a $10,000 grant from the now defunct Institute of Arab Studies for travel and research in connection with a book about the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and for failing to mention the matter either to the readers of *The Village Voice*, where he was a staff writer, or to his editor, he was "indefinitely suspended" from that newspaper.

Ever since *The New York Times* reported that we were discussing with Cockburn the possibility of his writing a column for *The Nation*, we have been besieged with questions. Here are some of them, with our thoughts on the much overblown matter.

Should Cockburn have accepted the grant?

Why not? As David Schneiderman, editor of *The Village Voice*, pointed out in an editorial explaining the suspension, "What Cockburn did not do was take money from an 'Arab propaganda group.' . . . The *Phoenix* [the Boston weekly that broke, or rather concocted, the story on the grant] offered no evidence that the Institute is anything more than what it purports to be," namely, a bona fide academic institute specializing in the study of Arab affairs. Writers, reporters, editors and scholars get grants all the time from institutes and foundations with a special interest in a field of study, a point of view or an ideological strategy.

Should Cockburn have told his editor or his readers about the grant?

If we were consultants on office diplomacy and public relations, we certainly would have advised him to inform them. And we start with a strong presumption in favor of full disclosure in all potential conflict-of-interest situations. But we do not think that his failure to disclose in a newspaper a grant for a book automatically constitutes a breach of journalistic ethics or intellectual integrity. If there was a lapse, it was in judgment rather than ethics. At worst, Cockburn jeopardized his credibility as a critic of other people's conflicts of interest. But as the editor of *The*

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Wall Street Journal (for which Cockburn writes a monthly column) noted, "Among all the things I can imagine Alex doing, this one seems fairly innocuous."

Did anything Cockburn do justify his "indefinite suspension" from the paper?

The Voice may have its reasons, which our reason knoweth not, but the punishment of silencing far exceeds the crime alleged by Schneiderman.

Why did The Nation *hire Cockburn?*

Because he is an immensely valuable voice. His stinging reports and critiques are a joy to read, and the press and public can ill afford to lose this trenchant, acerbic monitor.

The Q. and A. could go on—Will Cockburn write the book or return the money? Is he kind to animals? Will he get his copy in on time? Has he purchased the hair shirt required of *Nation* media critics?—but the point is that journalistic ethics is a murky area at best, and punishment for supposed infractions is usually for political rather than philosophical reasons. Would it have been ethical for Michael Kinsley, then the editor of *Harper's*, to write about a trip he took to Israel at the Israeli government's expense, if he revealed the source of his funding? Was it wrong for conservative columnist George Will to coach Ronald Reagan on the eve of his debate with Jimmy Carter and then analyze Reagan's performance on TV news shows?

And speaking of the Institute of Arab Studies, should *The Nation* be publishing the editorial that follows this one, by the institute's former chairman Edward W. Said? As it happened, Said, who has appeared in these pages on several previous occasions, had something urgent to say on the Lebanon crisis, and we are pleased to have him say it this week.

Two years ago at *The Nation*, we agreed to a set of rules that, among other things, prohibits editorial workers from accepting travel or other expenses from any source in return for a commitment to write an article for the magazine. We recognize that some situations pose difficult questions, and we are constantly refining our guidelines on a case-by-case basis.

We may not always be right. But we hope that Cockburn's "Beat the Devil" column will appear "indefinitely" in these pages, and we believe that it will be the best justification for the decision to embark on this joint venture.

P.S. When we tried to place an advertisement in *The Village Voice* informing Cockburn's readers that his wares are available at a new stand, we were turned down. Apparently, the mere mention of his name was too much. We sympathize, but is this scarred journalistic veteran to be a nonperson in the paper he served so disloyally all those years? Subsequently, we were told that *The Voice* has a policy of refusing ads for competitive publications. Aside from the fact that they might have informed us of this when we reserved space for the ad, we cannot believe that the paper is afraid of losing readers to *The Nation*, whose pages are innocent of ads for water beds, foutons and saunas, and whose personals are so decorous that your mother could read them.

Personals? That gives us an idea. "Put A Little Love In Your Life!" *The Voice*'s classified department proclaims, offering a special Valentine discount for February. Maybe we could sneak in the following:

> MWM (AC-DC, O.B.E.) Press Clips columnist on indef. susp. looking for casual mtngs with W/B, M/F rdrs, strt, bi-, tri- or uni-. NY Times SM & kinky ideological scenes. Spec. offer for VV rdrs. Write "Alex" c/o The Nation, 72 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011.

'Our' Lebanon

The resignation of Lebanese Prime Minister Shafik al-Wazzan and his Cabinet last week and the outbreak of total civil war are the logical consequences of a willful and disingenuous U.S. foreign policy. The Administration's attempts to hold Syria culpable and Reagan's sudden decision to "redeploy" the Marines ought not to distract us from the facts. We are witnessing a repetition of the policies the Carter Administration followed in Iran prior to the revolution; the situation also bears a striking resemblance to U.S. efforts in El Salvador. Now we see another cycle of violence and counterviolence from which, but for U.S. policy, the country might have been spared this time.

It requires no expertise to understand the U.S. role. After the Israeli invasion, whose appallingly destructive results Washington hailed as a "diplomatic opportunity," Reagan gave unqualified encouragement to the Christian Phalangist Party: Israel's ally in the invasion, perpetrator of the massacres in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps and, above all, professedly fascist group dedicated to Maronite Christian rule in a country whose demographic balance has shifted dramatically in favor of the Moslems. True, there was almost unanimous support among the Lebanese for Amin Gemayel's presidency, but most of that was conditioned on his promise to reform the 1943 National Covenant, a power-sharing scheme left over from French colonialism which benefits the Maronite oligarchy.

So the United States threw its support, and the Marines, behind the President and mythologized his youth and promise. We forgot that the civil war had been going on for almost eight years, claiming 100,000 lives, and was being fought because of the anomalies in the National Covenant. We forgot that Israel had demolished and occupied southern Lebanon and that Lebanon—despite its veneer of Franco-American manners—is an Arab country adjoining Syria. We also forgot that the Third World regimes we favor in our mania for anticommunist stability tend to get more intransigent and more insensitive to their internal circumstances the longer they hold power. In time such regimes are perceived as American lackeys and are therefore isolated. Not incidentally, we also bought the myth that the P.L.O. had destabilized Lebanon, not noticing that instability increased dramatically after it left and that the 450,000 Palestinian refugees who remained in Lebanon became the objects of persecution by the Phalange-dominated army and security services.

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The United States backed Gemayel when he brought in a weak, unrepresentative government of technocrats. The Reagan Administration gave him money and weapons to strengthen the army, without regard for its composition or leadership. In its haste for Lebanon to reach a withdrawal agreement with Israel in May 1983, Washington forgot about the civil war and the need to revise the 1943 pact, and it overlooked the fact that weak as it was, the government refused to ratify the agreement. When Begin resigned in August, a casualty of his disastrous Lebanon policy, Reagan paid little heed. When fighting broke out in September between the Lebanese Army and the Druse, whose traditional territories in the Shuf had been handed over to the Phalange by the Israelis, the United States sided with a government headed by a Phalangist leader. Naturally, the White House blamed his troubles on the machinations of Syria and the Soviet Union, on Shiite fanatics and on Arab radicals.

By late September, the Administration had persuaded Gemayel to hold national reconciliation talks in Geneva, but they were too little, too late. America's blank check had allowed the Lebanese government to accomplish its purposes, unnoticed by the U.S. media, which was content to follow dutifully the State Department's changing assessment of the situation, or to rely on Orientalist clichés about "volatile" Arabs and "unstable" national mentalities.

Among other things, the Gemayel government deployed the Lebanese Army in strength in Moslem areas while maintaining only a token presence in Phalange strongholds. The officer corps was staffed with ex-Phalangists, and in keeping with an announcement by Pierre Gemayel, the President's father, the "victorious" Phalangist Party secured its hold on "the institutional bases of power: the presidency, the army, the judiciary." And so it happened. Although the party controls only nine seats in Parliament, the government's economic, social, military and judicial policies and appointments have favored the minute part of Lebanon it represents, and those policies were unconditionally supported by the United States. Foreign policy was made by "Americanist" Lebanese advisers and ratified by the party's political bureau. Graft and profits from the arms trade, the customs administration and new construction benefited Gemayel's cronies. As for the public sector, which was withering from lack of attention by the central government, such programs as did exist were skewed outrageously to favor the minority. For example, £120 million was allocated for a sewer project in the Northern Metn (the Maronite heartland, with a population of 150,000) while a similar project for the Moslem southern suburbs of Beirut (population 700,000) received £30 million. Much of this was reported in the European press but not in the United States.

The Phalangists made a strenuous attempt to break the labor unions. Water shortages and electric power failures were frequent; telephone and health services deteriorated. The economy of southern Lebanon was severed from the rest of the country by Israeli occupation. There was pressure on the universities to promote Phalangist sympathizers at the expense of non-Phalangists, Palestinians and foreigners. The security services selectively harassed citizens along confessional and political lines. Throughout 1983, opposition to the central government solidified. In July, non-Phalangist Maronites united in a common front with the Druse, the Shiites and a large portion of the Sunni establishment. Still, the United States pressed Gemayel to enter into the unrealistic withdrawal agreement with Israel, as if the latter's demands were the only important ones in Lebanon. Afterward, of course, the security of American marines became Washington's primary concern.

By late 1983, when it had become impossible to ignore Lebanon's disintegration, the White House and many foreign policy experts began to speak of partitioning the country into Syrian and Israeli zones, as if external forces rather than internal struggles were ripping the country apart. By then, the United States had become a belligerent in the conflict, its fleet offshore flattening villages to protect the marines, and maiming Lebanese in the process.

Religious passions have acquired a dialectic of their own and have intensified frighteningly. But we should understand that Christian and Jewish currents are at work in the region as well as Moslem ones, and they are creating new realities which Reagan's self-righteous pronouncements can do little to change, except for the worse. The United States has played a lamentable role in Lebanon, doling out arms, supporting the wrong parties, demonizing groups it doesn't like and insuring the ascendancy of greater violence and political conflict. Despite his early promise, Gemayel is on his way to becoming America's Lebanese Shah, another ally pressed into misguided policies.

America presides over the cataclysms of a distant society, and just as the situation becomes unbearable, Reagan prepares to leave. No country deserves such a fate. Even if the Lebanese are largely responsible for the disasters they have suffered, the United States and its allies have done more than their share of the damage. EDWARD W. SAID

Edward W. Said is a professor of English at Columbia University. His most recent book is The Word, the Text, and the Critic *(Harvard University Press). He is a member of the Palestine National Council.*

DOUBLETHINK OF THE WEEK

In order to insure the continuation of aid, Secretary of State George Shultz recently certified that Haiti, which held window-dressing elections February 12, has made "a concerted and significant effort to improve the human rights situation. . . . by implementing the political reforms which are essential to the development of democracy . . . including the establishment of political parties, free elections and freedom of the press." The Secretary also acknowledged that "freedom of speech, the press and political association continue to be restricted and political parties are not allowed to function."

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SOVIETICUS.

STEPHEN F. COHEN

After three years of cold war policies, the Reagan Administration is offering Moscow a "constructive working relationship," or what used to be called détente. The offer, even if sincere, may be too late. For the first time since Stalin, there is the prospect of a Soviet leadership devoted to cold war and no longer believing in détente. Such a government would be the result of a long struggle inside the Soviet political establishment—a struggle in which U.S. policy has played a lamentable role.

Contrary to widespread American assumptions, official Soviet attitudes toward East-West relations have never been monolithic. A deep ideological division has existed between cold warriors and Western-oriented advocates of détente since the 1950s, when Khrushchev abandoned Stalin's Iron Curtain isolationism for an opening to the West based on "peaceful coexistence." Both sides in the conflict, which recalls the nineteenth-century dispute between Russian Westernizers and Slavophiles, have found strong support in official circles. And while every Soviet leadership since Stalin has pursued a Western orientation in foreign policy, it has done so in the face of a formidable cold war lobby. That lobby may finally prevail, if it has not already, largely because pro-détente arguments are a shambles.

Soviet proponents of détente have always insisted that significant cooperation with the West, particularly with the United States, is necessary to overcome backwardness in economic and other areas; to insure a superpower role in managing world affairs; and to avoid an unconstrained arms race and a nuclear war. The political question has been whether the Soviet leadership could actually rely on the United States to cooperate despite other Soviet international objectives and longstanding American animosity.

In the early 1970s, pro-détente analysts gave the leadership an assurance that has become their undoing. They argued that because the Soviet Union had achieved global military and political equality with the West, détente had become an "objective necessity" for the United States. As proof, they pointed to the "businesslike" Soviet policy of Richard Nixon, once America's arch cold warrior.

The Brezhnev leadership clung to that axiom throughout the deepening crisis of détente in the 1970s and even into the 1980s. It reasoned that Jimmy Carter's haphazardly hard-line policy was a temporary aberration and that Ronald Reagan would turn out to be another Nixon. But Reagan's assault on every premise of détente—his crusade against the "evil empire," his campaign to stop the Soviet-European pipeline and his program to regain military superiority—finally "dispelled" any lingering "illusions" in Moscow, as Yuri Andropov put it last August, and with them the "objective necessity" thesis of the pro-détente lobby.

Soviet cold warriors, having always rejected the premises of any Western orientation, are the beneficiaries of that disillusionment. Espousing Russophile and xenophobic ideas that go back to czarist and Stalinist days, they insist that the Soviet Union's rightful "destiny" as a social order and a great power is fortresslike isolation from the West and principled opposition to it. The United States, the epitome of pernicious Western values, isn't a solution to Soviet problems but the cause of them, from crises in Eastern Europe and Afghanistan to political dissent and social ills at home. Moreover, cold warriors argue, the West is inherently anti-Russian, as evidenced by centuries of conspiracies and invasions, and therefore the United States will never accept the prerequisite of détente: Soviet security and parity in world affairs. Reagan, not Nixon, is the face of America. Thus, for the Soviet Union, cold war is both political virtue and eternal necessity.

Dismissed as crackpot extremism by many leading Soviet officials only a decade ago, such views now seem cogent and prudent. Cold war ideology is more dominant in the Soviet press and in popular culture than at any time since Stalin. Not all of it is directly controlled by the leadership, but some of it is. The Soviet Union has withdrawn from arms talks. A catechism of cold war Communism, *The C.I.A. Against the U.S.S.R.*, has been issued (3 million copies) and serialized as orthodox wisdom in once-pro-détente newspapers. Xenophobic, pro-Stalin novelists win coveted prizes. And this month the leadership authorized an ominous new law against passing "information" to "foreign organizations." Meanwhile, once-outspoken and influential advocates of détente are dispirited and on the defensive.

The importance of the turnabout in the struggle between Western-oriented and cold war Communism can hardly be exaggerated. Soviet foreign and domestic policies are at stake, since the conflict is also between reform and reaction at home. The struggle, of course, is not over. Some important factors sustain the pro-détente lobby, including certain ties with the West that directly benefit Soviet elites, widespread fear of China and the threat of nuclear war.

But other factors, in addition to American policy, are abetting a cold war government in Moscow. One is the rising tide of nationalist sentiment, upon which cold warriors feed. Another is the growing political weight of watchdog institutions that have always promoted a "vigilant" cold war outlook. Still another is the ailing and weak leadership. No serious contender in the succession battles ahead is likely to wager his political fortunes on "illusions" of détente. Indeed, any strong leadership will be tempted to impose a stringent austerity program at home to cope with the country's economic problems, and thus to heed the calls for sacrifice and rigid controls implicit in cold war.

American cold warriors have always denied that such policy divisions exist in the Soviet establishment. Now, dimly perceiving otherwise, they suggest that a cold war Moscow is actually in America's interest because it will divert the Soviet leadership's attention to contingent "Iron Curtain" areas and away from global rivalry with the United States. That perspective is cynical and perilous. It will mean more repression in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, growing East-West mistrust bred by isolation, a permanent arms race and an even greater risk of nuclear war.

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CALVIN TRILLIN

I would like to get on the record with my side of the scale-tampering episode. Tampering occurred—make no mistake about that. Any doubts anybody might have had on that score were certainly put to rest by the weighing of the kitty litter. But I'm getting ahead of the story. At the beginning, the object on the scale was I, not the kitty litter. At the beginning, it was I who shouted, "Somebody has been tampering with this scale!"

I should state right now, in a straightforward manner, that my wife, Alice, was the leading suspect from the start. That is not an easy thing to admit. Nobody can be casual about acknowledging the possibility that the woman he lives with—the mother of his children, the daughter-in-law of his mother, the niece by marriage of his Uncle Benny—may be a scale tamperer. Naturally, I considered every conceivable alternative explanation. That did not take long. My daughters lack a motive. They are, after all, too old to engage in some schoolyard boasting along the lines of "My daddy is fatter than your daddy." A sincere effort to think of people who might have slipped into our house for the purpose of tampering with the scale did not bear fruit. Is it really likely that some particularly competitive high-hurdler fiddled with my scale to discourage me from competing in the Olympic trials? I don't think so. Is it possible that this was some bizarre retaliation for the questions I have raised now and then about the accuracy of the scales used by the proprietor of our local delicatessen, Lead Thumb Lindermann? I think not—although I'll admit that Lindermann would do almost anything that might provide him with a dramatic riposte ("I'll thank you to look to your own scales, sir!").

I have said that my daughters lack a motive. Can the same be said of Alice? If the scale had been adjusted downward, perhaps. The scale was not adjusted downward. In my experience, the scale is never adjusted downward. When scales start getting adjusted downward, some of the mistakes Lindermann absent-mindedly makes in giving change will start being in my favor. The tampering with my scale was an adjustment upward. For that, Alice has a motive.

Alice happens to have an intense—I am tempted to say obsessive—interest in my weight. I have assured her any number of times that she need not concern herself with this matter. I happen to have an excellent method of weight control myself: for thirty years now, I have dreamed of getting under the middleweight limit and thus being the last man to fight Sugar Ray Robinson before his retirement. That is not quite true: my fantasy does not extend to the actual fight. What I picture is the weigh-in. Sugar Ray is looking confident as I step toward the scale. The scuttlebutt—probably traceable to Alice—is that I'll never make the weight. Sugar Ray's handlers are snickering and making snotty little remarks about my midsection ("I thought he was going to check that extra baggage, but I guess he intends to carry it aboard"). Sugar Ray himself—ever the gentleman—tries unsuccessfully to suppress a grin as I step on the scale. The big arrow shoots up and then quivers to a stop: 159½. Sugar Ray's grin evaporates. A look of terror comes across his face.

"Did you say he was a middleweight or a light heavyweight?" Alice once said to me.

"Well, actually, he held the welterweight title until 1950, and then——." I stopped, suddenly aware that the question was not sincere. It cannot be easy to acknowledge that your wife is carrying on a campaign that includes sarcastic questions, but in order to get to the bottom of this entire sorry episode, such an acknowledgement must be made. I don't think that this is the place to explain in detail the campaign Alice carries on to control my weight. It is complicated and subtle and a bit distasteful. If I had to sum it up in a word, though, the word I would use is "nagging." Occasionally, as a change of pace, she uses sarcasm or ridicule—as in the aforementioned example. Until now, though, she has never resorted to scale tampering.

Which brings us to the deed itself. It took place on a sunny winter morning—one of those mornings that inspire confidence. I happened to take it in my mind to weigh myself; I do that every year or so, just to keep up with things. It was then that I shouted, "Somebody has been tampering with this scale!"

Alice looked innocent. Alice can look fearsomely innocent when provoked. "Scale?" she said.

It was at that point that I decided to subject the scale to rigorous scientific tests. I looked around for a suitable test mechanism—a certifiably weighed object that I could weigh. My eyes fell on an unopened bag of kitty litter. Carefully I carried it to the scale—leaving the scale in precisely the same place, just in case position on the floor was what scientists call one of the variables. The bag of kitty litter was, according to the label, a ten-pound bag. On our scale, it weighed thirteen and a half pounds.

"The scale is set three and a half pounds too heavy," I said to Alice.

Alice thought for a moment. "It evens out at the higher weights," she said.

Evens out at the higher weights! This is science? The other way to look at it, I reminded Alice, is that the scale, in its tampered state, is approximately 33 percent too heavy, which means that an object shown to weigh 180 pounds may in fact weigh 120—nearly forty pounds under the middleweight limit.

Alice, I am sorry to report, has not yet accepted that theory as completely proved. These days we often discuss such varying notions of mathematics—which is, of course, preferable to discussing my weight. "Have you weighed yourself lately?" Alice said the other day—changing the subject.

"No, I haven't," I said, "but I continue to weigh the kitty litter daily."

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Hello

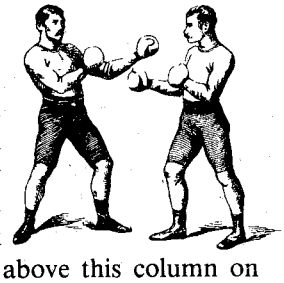
Beat the Devil is the title of a novel published by James Helvick in the early 1950s. Actually this Helvick was Claud Cockburn, who was lurking at the time behind an absolute thicket of pseudonyms. The pseudonyms were necessary because the cold war (bad old days of) was raging and publishers were shy of a Cockburn denounced by McCarthy as one of the most dangerous Reds in the world, and simultaneously excoriated in the Slansky trials as Colonel Claud of MI6.

It's not that these publishers thought Cockburn had done something inherently wrong, you must understand. They merely considered that the *appearance* of being a murderous Red turncoat with the blood of thousands on his hands was inappropriate, reducing his trustworthiness and credibility with the reading public.

Thus, the better to improve his appearance, my father disappeared behind his pseudonyms. Helvick, under the lash of penury, did well. He wrote *Beat the Devil*, which was bought by John Huston and Humphrey Bogart, just in time to save the roof from crashing in on our heads. The role of Truman Capote, billed as the screenwriter, is a topic I shall return to another time.

I've always felt fond of the title *Beat the Devil*, since it came in handy back then and helped to pay for my education. So here it is, once more unfurled.

Trustbusting



Some words on the theme of trust and credibility. I've spoken to Navasky about this, and I like to think we have already built up that relationship of fundamental mistrust that is so important between editor and author.

He fears that the "I'm Alex, rent me!" sign which I propose to run above this column on future occasions will present at least the appearance of impropriety. And I have my worries after *The Nation*'s scandalous misconduct in the Harper & Row affair.

How am I to be sure that Navasky or one of his henchfolk will not be scouring my files once my back is turned, seeking to pilfer material that they can publish with preposterous claims of "serving the public interest"? With studied casualness Navasky asked me the other day if I "happened to be working on a manuscript." From the glint in his eye, I could see that he could not wait for me to go to the bathroom so that he could start rifling my briefcase. Poor Jerry Ford.

So far as bonds of trust between author and readers are concerned, I'd say it's early days yet, and I wouldn't believe a word of it if I were you. With such preliminary observations . . . Forward!

Hold the Front Page

"I can sense winds shaping new forces: the women, for example, whose impact on politics in this decade will be at least as great as the impact of the blacks, perhaps greater. . . . But so much else is new, too. The homosexuals. . . ." I can sense Teddy White shaping his next book, of which the above was a taste in *The New York Times Magazine* of February 5.

The Nose Have It

I'm a McGovern-Jackson man myself, though in a perfect world I'd have to say McGovern-Dole. So I hope the New Hampshire voters, carefully weighing their Heisenberg effectiveness, will decide to give McGovern, via the next day's headlines, "a surprisingly strong showing" and all the verbal lightning that can strike a dark horse at primary time.

The national press is in a quandary. Beating up on Jackson is fun, but who can be touted as a serious contender against Mondale? Glenn is almost finished. Martin Schram shoveled so many failure phrases over him in *The Washington Post* that the Senator practically sank through the page: "a week of anxious mid-course corrections . . . faltering campaign . . . voiced his frustration and irritation . . . new populist-styled strategy . . . in a move that touched him personally removed his long-time close adviser. . . ."

Who else? A badly panicked press corps seems to have given up entirely on Cranston and Askew. Latest is an effort to provoke a Hart boomlet—a maneuver led by a "Hart Seen Moving Up in New Hampshire" headline in *The Washington Post* of February 6. And a few die-hards hold out for Hollings. Tom Wicker was touting him in *The New York Times* recently, though it was clear from the nonsense Hollings was spouting that his policies would induce a savage recession. Journalists seem to be soft on Hollings on the premise that if a Democrat keeps talking about blood, sweat, tears and budget freezes, it must be a sign of courage and intellectual acumen.

Between Hollings and Reagan I frankly don't know. I think I'd take Reagan. He is the Dada candidate after all. Who else but Reagan could have listened to a half-hour lecture on the confessional structure of Lebanon by that country's Foreign Minister last year, nodding agreeably as he did so, and then say by way of reply, "You know, your nose looks just like Danny Thomas's"?

But then, who else but Reagan could have said, on his Saturday radio broadcast of February 4, as Beirut began to explode, "Support for his [Gemayel's] government is broadening among the different groups. And just as important, our efforts to strengthen the Lebanese Army and its ability to keep the peace are making sure and steady progress."

Unacceptable Faces

Just remember, *any* Democrat is preferable to Reagan, sort of. Reagan's defense spending for fiscal 1984 is less than the projection Carter made for that year in the budget submitted before he left office. Implication: it doesn't matter who is in office; the military is entirely out of control. Oh, and the nonmilitary spending in fiscal 1984 is greater than that projected by Carter.

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Forward to Yalta

Yuri Andropov and Franklin Roosevelt may have more in common than is generally supposed, at least in their physical conditions. F.D.R. we know about. Theories thus far advanced to account for Andropov's prolonged absence from public view have ranged from flu to renal failure to an assassination bid by a distraught Brezhnev relative. In a recent interview from London, Zhores Medvedev states flatly that a spasm (a heart spasm, actually) suffered last spring has left Andropov unable to walk unaided and that "the political problem over his health derives from the possibility that he will be confined to a wheelchair."

Medvedev's information comes from high-level sources in the Soviet medical establishment.

The interview with Medvedev appeared two weeks ago in the British periodical *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*. According to Medvedev:

> His ill health has restricted his range of activity, but we must remember that Soviet policy-making is not a matter of public appearances. And the days are long gone when Khrushchev would tour the country investigating the local state of affairs and making decisions on the spot. Now the General Secretary's work is very much a matter of handling papers at a desk and presiding over small meetings of colleagues. At the same time, the party leadership remembers how damaging it was for Brezhnev in his last years when he was shown on TV to be physically incapacitated . . . so they prefer to keep Andropov out of the public view until his strength is restored.
>
> Is kidney disease the main problem?
>
> No, it is his legs, his inability to walk unaided as a result of a spasm he suffered in the spring.

Medvedev says the heart problem—just like the kidney problem, which requires dialysis—is controllable, and continues:

> Alterations are already being made in the Gregori Hall, where the Supreme Soviet meets, to install a special elevator for him, but his doctors are evidently still hoping that he can be restored to the point where he can walk unaided.

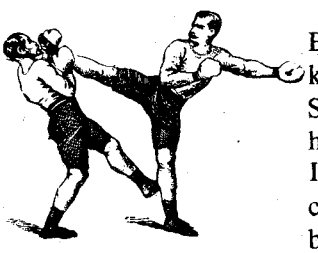
Medvedev adds tartly that if Andropov is "confined, Roosevelt-like to a wheelchair," it will be a very good thing for disabled people in the Soviet Union, who have scandalously few facilities of the sort available in the West.

If he had any sense, Andropov would press for a summit at Yalta with Reagan and appear in his wheelchair, wearing a cloak and gripping a cigarette holder in his mouth at a jaunty angle. That would be very chic.

Labour Focus is an excellent leftist quarterly, available from Box 23, 136 Kingsland High St., London E8, or from Peter Rossmann, 2417 Acton St., Berkeley, Calif. 94702.

Disinfo

I suppose people like Arnaud de Borchgrave would say that the foregoing is typical Soviet disinformation and that Andropov is suffering from Lupo's disease, otherwise known as lupus vulgaris, by which the victim's face is disfigured with small nodules, topped with thin crusts or scabs. In some cases the cheeks are covered with red patches, themselves covered with thin scales, underneath which are seen the widened opening of the sebaceous ducts. At all events, the victim looks disgusting and has to flee the eyes of man.



On the other hand, the de Borchgrave gang might wish to keep quiet. The fantasists about Soviet Disinformation Central have taken a bit of a toss lately. It all started when a tape began circulating round Europe just before the last British election. Through a great deal of static one could hear the voices of Reagan and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher talking to each other on the telephone. Reagan says such things as, "If there is a conflict, we shall fire missiles at our allies to see to it that the Soviet Union stays within its borders," and Thatcher confides that she ordered the sinking of the Belgrano to wreck peace talks that might have ended the Falklands war. An Italian newspaper was taken in, but everyone else realized the tape was a hoax, spliced together from snatches of Reaganite and Thatcherite rhetoric.

Then, on January 8, the London *Sunday Times* ran a story about the affair, under the headline "How the KGB Fools the West's Press." The paper's U.S. correspondent, Will Ellsworth-Jones, reported breathlessly that the State Department viewed the tape forgery as a product of

> an increasingly sophisticated Russian disinformation campaign. "They have accelerated their efforts and they have fine-tuned them," claims Larry Semakis, deputy director of a State Department team that monitors what the Russians call "active measures." He admits that "no one can specifically prove in a court of law that a Soviet hand was on this or that item," but he says that there is a pattern in the use of forgeries which points unmistakably to the Russians.

Two weeks later, *The Observer* reported with considerable glee that the supposedly "sophisticated" piece of Soviet disinformation had in fact been concocted by the British anarchist punk rock group Crass.

The tape had been put together in a farmhouse in Essex, where the eight members of the band, which includes Joy de Vivre, G Sus and Sybil Right, live with their children. Crass, which sounds a good lot to me, said, "We wanted to precipitate a debate on those subjects to damage Mrs. Thatcher's position in the election."

Small Step for Allah

The K.G.B. will stop at nothing all the same. U.S. officials in Egypt and India were complaining last spring about a supposedly Soviet disinformation story going the rounds which said that when Neil Armstrong landed on the moon, he heard voices. He got back to Earth and learned that what he had heard was an Islamic call to prayer. He was so impressed that he became a Moslem, whereupon NASA fired him.

A society that produces disinformation like that can't be all bad.

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ARTICLES.

GOLDEN GATEWAY FOR DRUGS

The Miami Connection

About two and a half years ago, Penny Lernoux told us she wanted to follow her just-published Cry of the People *with a book about banks. We assigned an intern, David Corn, as a full-time researcher on the project. When the first draft of her book came in, we were fascinated by some of the stories she had collected on Miami's booming drug scene and asked her to expand them into an article, with her banking material serving as a backdrop. She did so and here are the results. (Additional research, supervised by Eric Etheridge, was done by interns David Bank and L.A. Kauffman.)*

—The Editors

PENNY LERNOUX

Miami International Airport. All year round, the mile-long concourse is jammed with sweating people who pound on ticket counters and push through customs gates. The worst crush is at the counters of the Latin American airlines, where crowds of Spanish-speaking passengers mill about, surrounded by wailing children, anxious relatives and enormous crates of gringo goodies—inflatable boats, television sets and refrigerators. At Colombia's Avianca, airport security guards are regularly called to clear a path through the mob and the boxes.

"You live in Colombia, huh?" says the Cuban exile taxi driver as we slam out of the airport. "I'm looking for some extra business. You wouldn't happen to have any coke for sale?"

When I say no, he floors the accelerator and jumps the light at the tollgate on the freeway. "I'm not going to pay their fucking toll," he says. "Those gringos, their rules are for them, not us." One hears that often in Miami.

'Casablanca on the Gulf Stream'

When the narcotics boom took off in the mid-1970s, Miami became the drug capital of the world. More than 70 percent of the U.S. supply flows through it. The traffic has brought drug-related crime (Miami's murder rate is the nation's second highest) and wealth in the form of "narcobucks," which are laundered in legitimate as well as shady banks and financial institutions. The huge influx of hot dollars has made Miami a rival to New York City as the nation's financial capital.

"Casablanca on the Gulf Stream," one crime expert calls the city. The intrigue and corruption resemble that in the movie, but the city is also a microcosm of U.S. society, with the same venal politicians and crime overlords pulling invisible strings. Spanish-speaking criminals add Latin spice to this down-home dish and have brought with them the corrupt practices endemic to politics in their native lands.

Four groups of players are prominent in the Miami action: Italian and Jewish crime syndicates; Cuban exile terrorist groups and the Central Intelligence Agency; Latin American drug dealers; and bankers.

The Cuba-Mafia-C.I.A. Axis

A high proportion of the Latin drug dealers are Cuban exiles. Actually, the Cuban drug connection goes back to Prohibition and the rise of Charles (Lucky) Luciano, one of the most brilliant organized-crime executives of the century. In the early 1930s he restructured the old Mafia into twenty-four family cartels. Luciano also brokered an *entente cordiale* between the Mafia and the Jewish mobs of Meyer Lansky, who became Luciano's lieutenant and later the financial genius of the U.S. underworld. With the end of Prohibition in sight, Luciano turned to heroin, which offered an attractive substitute for the liquor trade. His agents developed an efficient supply network in China, where Gen. Chiang Kai-shek had come to power with the help of the Shanghai heroin cartel.

Under dictator Fulgencio Batista in the 1930s, Cuba became the principal entry point of Luciano's heroin network. Lansky controlled the Cuban traffic as well as most of Havana's gambling casinos, but his base of operations was Florida. There he became friendly with Sicilian-born Santo Trafficante, who had earned his reputation as an effective organizer in the Tampa gambling rackets. Lansky came to trust Trafficante and in 1940 put him in charge of his interests in Havana. By early in the next decade, Trafficante had carved out an empire of his own, and he set up his son Santo Jr. with the Havana rackets. When the elder Trafficante died in 1954, Santo became Mafia boss of Florida. Unostentatious and self-effacing, he proved to be one of the most effective organized-crime leaders in the United States.

After Luciano's death in 1962, his number-two men, Lansky and Vito Genovese, were the logical successors. Genovese, however, was serving a fifteen-year sentence on a heroin-trafficking charge; Lansky, then in his 60s, was too old and too carefully watched to become more actively involved. Thus, Luciano's role went to Trafficante by default.

Fidel Castro's revolution in 1959 cost Trafficante and Lansky their lucrative Cuban operation. The loss was partially offset by Trafficante's control of Florida's *bolita* action. This Cuban lottery had become a big moneymaker because of all the anti-Castro refugees who came to Florida in the 1960s. Trafficante's organization recruited Cuban

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Penny Lernoux is The Nation*'s Latin America correspondent. This article draws on* In Banks We Trust, *published this month by Anchor Press/Doubleday.* *© Copyright 1984 by Penny Lernoux.* *The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of The Fund for Investigative Journalism.*

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gangsters to run the lottery and serve as narcotics couriers and distributors. When the C.I.A. called for volunteers for the Bay of Pigs invasion, Trafficante mustered a respectable contingent. Shortly before the invasion, in 1961, he collaborated in a C.I.A. plot to poison Castro, and in 1963 he was involved in a bizarre boat raid against Cuba, sponsored by the C.I.A. and William Pawley, a wealthy financier who once owned the Havana bus system and several Cuban sugar refineries, and who had served as a special assistant to the Secretary of State in the Truman Administration.

The C.I.A. has its own links to the heroin traffic. In *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*, Alfred McCoy shows that during World War II, Luciano and Lansky secretly worked with the C.I.A.'s forerunner, the Office of Strategic Services, as part of the war effort. Supposedly for the same reason, O.S.S. agents in China became deeply involved in the heroin-funded politics of Gen. Chiang Kai-shek. After the war and Chiang's defeat by the Communists, opium production shifted to Southeast Asia, and several of the most important agents who had collaborated with the generalissimo moved to Miami.

One of those agents was Miami banker and lawyer Paul Helliwell, who had served as chief of special intelligence in China. When the O.S.S. was reorganized as the C.I.A., he was in on the ground floor. He was Colonel Helliwell in those days, and E. Howard Hunt was one of his agents. C.I.A. sources told *The Wall Street Journal* that in Asia, Helliwell frequently bought information with five-pound lots of opium ("three sticky brown bars"). After the war he returned to his native Florida, where he helped set up and run Sea Supply Inc., a C.I.A. front in Miami. Sea Supply shipped arms to Thai opium producers and to members of the Nationalist Chinese Army who had fled to Burma and were engaged in opium smuggling. During the buildup for the Bay of Pigs invasion, he served as the C.I.A.'s paymaster in Florida; he later opened secret accounts for Chiang Kai-shek's relatives and U.S. mobsters in a network of Miami and Caribbean banks. Among his business associates was Louis Chesler, a Florida real estate developer who had dealings with Meyer Lansky. Helliwell also served as legal counsel to a Panamanian holding company that controlled a Bahamian gambling casino connected with Lansky. According to a close associate, Helliwell kept the spook and gangster sides of his business separate. He cultivated the impression that the latter was a cover for the former when the reverse was probably closer to the truth.

After the Bay of Pigs disaster, the C.I.A. station in Miami continued to work with the Trafficante organization on plots to assassinate Castro. The head of the station, Theodore Shackley, was later transferred to Laos, where he helped organize the C.I.A.'s secret army of Meo tribesmen, who were deeply involved in heroin trafficking. In 1973, he replaced William Colby as chief of covert operations in the Far East when Colby was promoted to Director of Central Intelligence. To complete the picture, Trafficante himself showed up in Saigon in 1968, during a tour aimed at replacing Luciano's old China network with one based on Southeast Asian opium production.

The Cuban Connection

Preparation for the Bay of Pigs plot brought a host of C.I.A. agents to southern Florida. The agency recruited a force of 2,000 Cuban exiles and trained them in the arts of bomb making, demolition and murder. After the invasion failed, survivors of the exile army were in limbo. In the 1970s, when the U.S. demand for marijuana and cocaine took off, those veterans were naturals for the narcotics trade. A former commando leader who had trained them told a *St. Petersburg Times* reporter, "These people came out knowing how you do it. They found [drug smuggling] absolutely child's play when they started in over here, because [U.S. law enforcement] didn't have that type of defense. They didn't even need most of their expertise."

Washington's first inkling of a Cuban connection came in 1970, when the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, predecessor of the Drug Enforcement Administration, cracked a major heroin and cocaine ring run by veterans of the Bay of Pigs invasion. By the mid-1970s law enforcement agencies were inundated by waves of exile-directed drug traffic. Other criminal activities flourished, usually with a political cover. Miami police said that many instances of crime in the exile community alleged to have been politically motivated, such as the kidnapping and fleecing of supposed Castro sympathizers, were purely mercenary shakedowns. "Ninety percent of the people in exile terrorist organizations like Alpha 66 and Omega 7 are extortionists," said a former member of the Dade County Organized Crime Bureau. "They have no intention of going back to Cuba—that's just a cover for the same old mob rackets. But people are afraid to challenge them because they're killers."

The record of Cuban terrorists is impressive: at least 200 bombings and 100 murders have been attributed to them

DRAWINGS BY ED KOREN

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since Castro's revolution, far surpassing the carnage caused by Italy's Red Brigades or Libya's hit squads. Many Cubans who engage in terrorism also traffic in narcotics. According to crime historian Hank Messick, when the exiles began trafficking, they claimed their motives were patriotic: they were raising money to carry on the fight against Castroism. "Just as Lansky excused some of his crimes in the name of protecting Jews and then Israel, so did some Cubans hide their appetite for quick money behind the flag of freedom."

The cover story has worked. Because of their supposed hatred of Castro, the Cubans have literally been allowed to get away with murder. Despite their bloody careers, they move about freely, hold press conferences and rarely go to jail; when they do, their stay is brief. As Messick has noted, they are now "comfortably into their third decade as America's first and only home-grown international terrorist group."

One of the "patriots"-cum-crooks was Ricardo (Monkey) Morales, a self-admitted assassin and drug trafficker. The stocky, silver-haired mercenary worked briefly as a secret agent under Castro before immigrating in 1960 to Miami, where he was employed by the C.I.A. and the F.B.I. While in the F.B.I.'s pay, Morales went to Caracas, where he joined the Venezuelan secret police, DISIP, and served as chief of airport security. By Morales's account, the head of DISIP was a C.I.A. informant privy to a plot involving an Air Cubana plane that made weekly flights from Caracas. In court testimony and published interviews, Morales boasted of his part in planning the October 1976 bombing that cost the lives of seventy-three Air Cubana passengers, including the entire Cuban national fencing team. Morales was unrepentant about the operation, which he and Miami police insisted had been a C.I.A. job. "If I had to, I would do it over again," he told *The Miami Herald*. Nor did he regret his other escapades, which included murder, assassination attempts and some fifteen to twenty-five bombings in the Miami area. Monkey could afford such bravado: his intelligence connections protected him from prosecution.

Morales was deeply involved in Miami's drug trade—once he was caught red-handed overseeing a shipment of ten tons of marijuana—yet he was never convicted, again because of his "undercover agent" status. In one cocaine case in Miami, Morales, who had been granted immunity, admitted to a defense lawyer that he had murdered an anti-Castro activist and tried to execute another (the victim survived seventeen machine-gun bullet wounds). "He told me about the murder," the lawyer recalled to *The Herald*, "as cavalierly as if he were talking about a new pair of shoes." Morales apparently thought nothing of publicizing such deeds, since he told the same story to *The Herald*. At the time of the attempted execution, in 1968, Morales was a contract agent for the C.I.A.; he was working for the F.B.I. when he murdered Cuban exile Eladio Ruíz in broad daylight outside an apartment building in downtown Miami. After the execution—reportedly carried out as a warning to Castro sympathizers—Morales casually climbed into a waiting car and drove away. Witnesses reported that the car was followed by another, in which sat two well-dressed Anglos presumably riding shotgun. The smooth-talking Cuban met his end during a gun battle in a Miami bar in 1982, the victim of the only law he respected.

Morales obtained his coke supplies from Col. Luis Arce Gómez, one of the organizers of the 1980 "cocaine coup" in Bolivia, in which military leaders heavily involved in the international narcotics trade seized power. For a time his country's Interior Minister and now in exile in Argentina, Arce Gómez once employed Nazi butcher Klaus Barbie to set up death squads to terrorize the Bolivians and protect the fleet of airplanes Arce Gómez used for smuggling cocaine. Evidence suggests that Barbie himself may have visited Miami sometime after the coup to negotiate a guns-for-drugs deal.

Other clients of Arce Gómez included Bay of Pigs veterans Francisco Condom-Gil, Rafael Villaverde and Frank Castro, who ran a coke ring in Miami until 1982, when police, acting on information supplied by the trio's former partner, Monkey Morales, arrested them. Like Morales, those men had moved freely in the international milieu of terrorism and drugs. Allegedly, Condom-Gil was an important Miami contact for the "French connection" heroin ring in the 1960s, and Villaverde was employed by the notorious former C.I.A. agent and arms trafficker Edwin Wilson to knock off the enemies of Libyan strongman Muammar el-Qaddafi. Castro is believed to have masterminded a 1976 meeting in the Dominican Republic, at which Cuban exile terrorist groups drew up a hit list. Reportedly on that list was the name of Orlando Letelier, Foreign Minister in Salvador Allende's government, who was assassinated by a car bomb in Washington in 1976. Although the F.B.I. botched the Letelier case, independent investigations proved that Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet had bankrolled a neofascist group known as the Cuban Nationalist Movement, now Omega 7, to carry out the murder.

As evidenced by John Dinges and Saul Landau's *Assassination on Embassy Row* and their articles in *The Nation* [see "The Chilean Connection," November 28, 1981, and "The C.I.A.'s Link to Chile's Plot," June 12, 1982], the C.I.A. did its best to stonewall the F.B.I.'s Letelier investigation, presumably because of the agency's close ties to the Pinochet regime, which it had helped bring to power. C.I.A. complicity would also help explain the F.B.I.'s reluctance to follow through on the case and its repeated refusal to admit that the assassins were involved in the drug trade. According to Miami police sources, one of the indicted accomplices in the killing, Guillermo Novo, had worked as a "mule" (courier) for well-known Cuban dealers. In 1977 Novo went into hiding in Miami's Little Havana section. A year later police spotted him in a nightclub owned by one of the godfathers of the Cuban mafia. Soon after, they arrested him, along with a suspected trafficker with links to the Mexican heroin trade in whose apartment Novo had been living. A third occupant of the apartment, Alvin Ross Díaz, also indicted for the Letelier killing, was arrested carrying a bag of cocaine.

In an article in "Parapolitics/USA," a now-defunct newsletter on international crime and terrorism, John Cummings reported that Miami detectives were perplexed by the F.B.I.'s

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apparent indifference toward Novo and Ross Díaz, although they were wanted for questioning in the Letelier affair. Even more perplexing was the revelation that an F.B.I. informant had provided Novo with a series of disguises and a false passport and driver's license while he was hiding in Miami. The F.B.I.'s explanation for ignoring the drug trail to Little Havana was curious: it didn't want the case "messed up with dope." A more accurate explanation is that an investigation would have revealed the C.I.A.'s—and perhaps the F.B.I.'s—use of drug dealers as informants and for terrorist missions.

As Cuban exiles point out, in their culture "appearances are more important than reality." That, they say, is why so many drug traffickers play the anticommunist game. Or as drug trafficker Villaverde put it to *The Herald*, "I am a friend of the terrorists. For me that's not bad when you do it in the defense of liberty." Large sums of money supposedly donated by the Cuban community to the legal defense funds of renowned terrorist patriots may actually come from the drug traffic. According to Miami police, that was the source of the $400,000 raised to post bail for Novo and Ross Díaz.

Cummings explains that for years the F.B.I. claimed it could not crack terrorist organizations like Omega 7 because they were popular in the Cuban community and informers were hard to find. But officers with the Dade County Organized Crime Bureau call that idea "crap." They say that witnesses to crimes committed by those groups are reluctant to testify because they fear being killed—not by outraged patriots but by ruthless gangsters. That the F.B.I. knew this is shown by its recent use of anti-organized-crime statutes to prosecute Eduardo Arocena, the alleged leader of Omega 7, and his chief lieutenant for racketeering.

Whatever the F.B.I.'s shortcomings, full responsibility for failure to stop the Cuban terrorist mafia cannot be laid at its door. F.B.I. agents say privately that the Bureau is an instrument of the executive branch and that enforcement policies change with the politics of the man in the White House. Under Carter, for example, there was neither a crackdown on terrorists nor an encouragement of them, tacit or otherwise. That waffling reflected the Administration's halfhearted attempts to improve relations with Havana. Reagan, in contrast, has turned back the clock to the early 1960s by unleashing the exiles against Castro and Nicaragua's Sandinistas. *Contra* training camps operate openly in southern Florida; one camp commander even hosts a weekly Miami radio show. And Radio Martí's anti-Castro propaganda will soon be broadcast by the Voice of America to Cuba, at an annual cost of $10 million. But if anti-Castroism is in vogue, it is doubtful that the "heroes" of the Bay of Pigs are a threat to the Cuban President. They have become so enmeshed with drugs that many of them have been or are now in jail.

A Drug Economy

The high visibility of Cubans and other Latins in Miami's drug traffic enables Anglos to blame them for all of it. But Miami would not be the nation's gateway for drugs without the acquiescence of the city's civic and business leaders. "We bankers are always saying how Miami has become an international banking center like London or New York," observed the chairman of a Florida bank. "But that's a lot of hogwash. The reason so many banks have opened offices here is because of the hot money, particularly drug money."

A prominent lawyer decries civic apathy. "There is no real interest here in preserving the quality of life," he told *Time*. "I don't think there is any real community outrage about the drug trade. When I urge the junior lawyers here to join civic groups instead of playing racquetball, they say they're not interested."

Miamians who do speak out, like insurance executive Arthur Patten, a former City Commissioner, are vilified by their fellow citizens. Municipal leaders called Patten a coward and told him to shut up after he made negative comments about the city to the press. He lost business from hotel owners, who were annoyed by the bad publicity he generated, and eventually he moved to North Carolina. But playing ostrich won't solve the problem. As *The Miami*

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Herald has repeatedly said, "Reality, not image, is South Florida's problem."

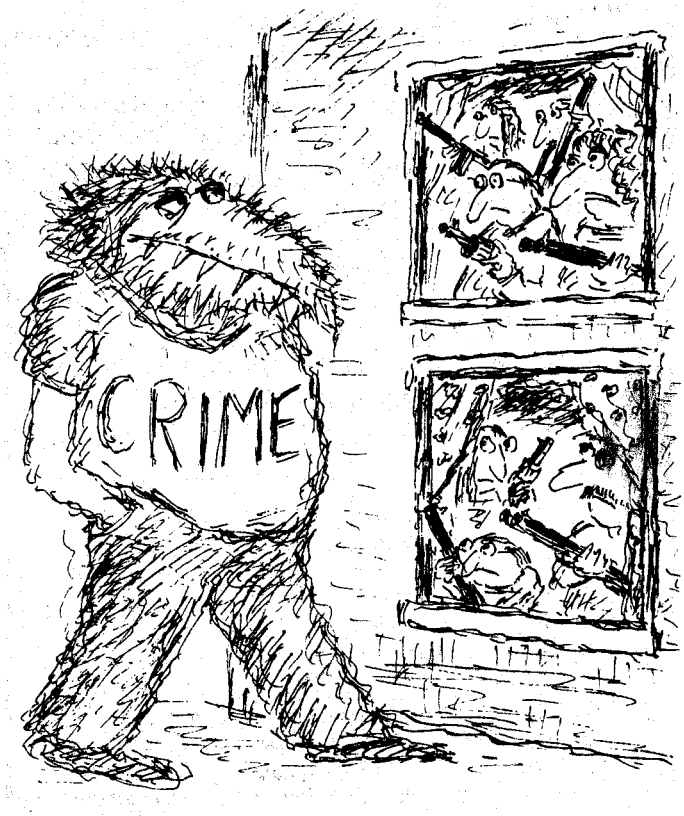
A Florida grand jury that studied crime in Miami agreed:

> We recommend that the hard issues begin to be addressed. We find that we have not fully committed ourselves as a society to eradicate narcotics, and perhaps we never will. Our local economy apparently has benefited enormously and our culture has become tolerant of marijuana and even of cocaine. Yet we ask the small numbers of law enforcement personnel assigned to narcotics interdiction to stop a supply for which we create a demand. That is clearly a costly hypocrisy.

Charles Kimball, a real estate economist who watches foreign purchases of South Florida property closely, estimates that nearly half the $1.5 billion that foreign companies invest annually in Miami real estate comes from illegal sources: drug dealers, organized-crime syndicates, foreign criminals and international swindlers. The construction industry in Miami would be on the rocks were it not for shady investors. The same can be said of retailers of luxury items such as yachts and airplanes, and of accountants, lawyers and other professionals who have fattened on the narcotics traffic. In an article in *Inquiry*, a spokesman for the U.S. Customs Service, one of five Federal agencies trying to stop the drug traffic, said: "You know what would happen if we really did our job here? If we were 100 percent effective, we would so drastically affect the economy that *we* would become the villains."

Dodge City South

Crime is a major concern among Miamians. Instead of talking about the weather or last night's TV program, neighbors discuss the latest robbery or murder on their street. Everyone has a personal horror story—getting caught in the crossfire of a gangland shooting at the local shopping center, watching in terror as the occupants of two cars spray each other with machine-gun bullets at a stoplight. Perhaps the most bitter reaction was that of a Colombian banker. During his first week in Miami, the banker's briefcase was stolen from under his legs while he was paying his bill at the luxurious Omni Hotel. Then the hubcaps on his car were stolen. One night he and his wife went out to dinner, leaving their newborn son with their Colombian maid, who had been with the family for years. Their house had two different alarm systems, one of which was connected to the local police station. Upon returning home, the couple discovered the maid's body floating in the swimming pool; their baby was safe in his crib, but his clothing was drenched, as if he had been in the pool. The banker swore that if one more thing happened to him or his family, they would pack up and return to Bogotá, once considered the most dangerous city of its size in the hemisphere.



The Miami Herald is full of such stories from people who want to know why "the city of my dreams" has become Dodge City South. In the last decade, the homicide rate in South Florida has jumped more than 400 percent, making Miami one of the most dangerous cities in the United States. "When you see a helicopter, you know they've found another body," said a college professor, whose backyard was used as a murderer's dumping ground several years ago. The corpse was of a young Colombian man who had attended the birthday party of a neighbor's daughter. Like most crimes in Miami, the murder was never solved, and to this day the professor and his neighbors have no idea why the man was killed, "except that he was a Colombian."

Since 1980 the Miami police force has been enlarged, and there are more judges on the criminal circuit; even so the city cannot cope. "In an average month we file 2,000 felony cases after screening," said George Ray Havens, head of the Miami Criminal Investigative Division of the State Attorney's office. "If every individual charged was granted a jury trial, we wouldn't be able to file another case for at least three years." The Criminal Investigative Division has twenty-two agents and receives nearly 500 requests for investigations every month. "If the case is complicated—say, a financial racket—we just can't handle it," said Havens. A lawyer in the U.S. Attorney's office cited in *Harper's* said that even if no cases were added, it would take the sixty-three full-time lawyers under him nine years to finish those already filed.

The Miami police are reluctant to accept drug cases because they have no more room to store the evidence, even after burning tons of marijuana in the Florida Power and Light Company's furnaces. The Key West sheriff's office finds itself most days with a stash worth $4 million on its hands; the sheriff's men spend most of their time protecting it from thieves. Convicted drug dealers are jamming Florida prisons: between 1978 and 1980 paroles jumped 50 percent as burglars, armed robbers and other criminals were turned loose to make room for them. Still, most drug traffickers, even the biggest fry, serve only a short time: the average

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sentence is less than two years, with eligibility for parole after a year.

About all the overburdened authorities can do about the murder rate is to keep a body count, and that is a challenge. So many corpses pile up at the Miami morgue that since 1981 the Dade County medical examiner has had to rent a refrigerated hamburger van to house the overflow. "If you stay here, you arm yourself to the teeth, put bars on the windows and stay at home at all times," Arthur Patten told reporters. "I've been through two wars and no combat zone is as dangerous as Dade County."

Gun sales are rising, as are purchases of security devices—alarms, locks, floodlights, guard dogs, surveillance systems. In 1981, gun sales in Dade County were up approximately 46 percent over the previous year. "Most customers are people like your mother," said the owner of a gun shop in *Time*. "They're just average, everyday folk who want to continue to live." Even those who favor stricter gun-control laws doubt they would have much effect in South Florida. "If you take guns away, they'll use knives," a police captain told *Maclean's*. "If you take away knives, they'll use a hammer. Hammer, saw. Saw, machete. Pretty soon we'll be back to hands."

No one is immune from crime. The regional commissioner for the Customs Service was mugged and robbed outside a Miami disco. A Federal judge's life was threatened by drug defendants. A Florida drug gang let out a $200,000 contract to hit men: their job, to kill all the State's witnesses before the gang's upcoming trial. Governor Robert Graham told me that after he visited Colombia seeking the cooperation of local authorities to stop the cocaine trade, a Colombian mob dispatched an assassin to Tallahassee to kill him.

The Colombian Brethren

The Colombian mafias are much like the Sicilian original, tightly knit organizations based on blood ties. The penalty for betraying one's family is death; the sentence is usually carried out by a Colombian-based hit man who takes the morning flight from Bogotá to Miami and returns that night. Long the world's leaders in counterfeiting U.S. dollars, Colombian racketeers have become more sophisticated in recent years, mingling drugs, stolen securities and counterfeit bills in giant money-cycling operations which span three continents. They entered the U.S. cocaine market as suppliers, but since the mid-1970s they have taken control of most of the distribution. (Cubans still dominate the marijuana traffic.) The Latin mafias are organized like multinational corporations, with separate divisions for imports, transport, distribution and finance. A major smuggling operation has 100 to 200 employees in Miami, usually illegal aliens carrying false passports. The Florida organizations are supported by larger ones in the producing countries, where complaisant politicians are often paid to look the other way. Some 200,000 peasant families in four countries depend on the traffic for their livelihood.

Given the international scope of the traffic and the huge sums of money involved, it is ridiculous to believe that any

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police force can interdict the flow. No matter how many tons of narcotics are seized or how many people are arrested, there will always be more where they came from. Federal District Judge Alcee Hastings, who is frequently criticized for the lenient sentences he gives in drug convictions, explains that most of the people who come before him are low-level traffickers. "Drugs are tearing the hell out of the social fabric of America, but we're not catching the right people," he told *The Herald*. "They're arresting a mule a minute, an offender an hour. When they start catching bankers, judges, senators . . . you'll see who's tough. The ringleaders are in a lot of trouble if they come before me."

The D.E.A.'s Numbers Game

In 1981 *The Miami Herald* printed the results of its four-month study of the Drug Enforcement Administration; it went a long way toward explaining the basis of Hastings's complaint. In addition to finding the usual bureaucratic infighting, the study showed that the agency's principal weakness is its obsession with statistics. To make the D.E.A. look good, agents are ordered to concentrate on quick seizures and arrests. They are often occupied for days, setting up relatively small buys that yield no new information and no important indictments. "All of us in law enforcement have got to get away from this attitude that our sterling successes involve the number of tons of marijuana and cocaine we can seize," James York, commissioner of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, told *The Herald*. "A ton of cocaine isn't worth a damn. You've got to penetrate the organizations." Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Perry added, "Street operations are dangerous, disruptive, labor-intensive, expensive and frequently unsuccessful."

Getting the high-level traffickers entails long, tedious investigations for which few D.E.A. agents are trained and on which they receive little support. Example: In 1981 a two-month investigation by Operation Greenback, an interagency task force, led to the arrest of Isaac Kattan, a Colombian and the biggest drug-money launderer ever caught in Florida. Kattan was an impressive catch, but he was only a middleman. Others in the task force, particularly Internal Revenue Service agents, wanted to delay his arrest, hoping he would lead them to his bosses, but the D.E.A. insisted on nabbing him for dealing in cocaine. "They got twenty kilos of coke but not much else," said a member of the task force. "We found that chopping off Kattan's head didn't kill off the organization; another head popped up to do the same things. If the D.E.A. hadn't been in such a hurry to make an arrest, maybe we would have got the organization."

The Government Accounting Office criticizes the Justice Department, which oversees the D.E.A., for not "taking the profit out of drug trafficking." In a 1981 report, the G.A.O. pointed out that although Congress passed a law in 1970 enabling the government to seize the financial assets of criminals, the D.E.A. "simply has not exercised the kind of leadership and management necessary to make asset forfeiture a widely used law enforcement technique." As of 1980, the Justice Department had obtained a mere $2 million in forfeited assets, the G.A.O. found, and most of those were items that drug traffickers consider expendable, like boats and airplanes.

Congress passed the forfeiture law, expecting the Justice Department to seize the U.S. and foreign bank accounts of the top-level dealers. But that requires an entirely new approach by the D.E.A., which continues to see narcotics enforcement in simplistic cops-and-robbers terms. Observed George Havens, "The attitude of the average bureaucrat is: big cases, big problems; little cases, little problems; no cases, no problems. People don't want problems."

It is also unhappily true that with so many narcobucks floating around Miami, corruption among police agents, judges and others is inevitable. One-fifth of an entire division of the Dade County police force was indicted for taking payoffs and engaging in drug trafficking. Two officers were charged with working with a known drug racketeer. Jeffrey Scharlatt, a former group supervisor of the D.E.A.'s Miami office, pleaded guilty after being indicted by a Federal grand jury on corruption charges. Florida's Attorney General, Jim Smith, said in an interview on *60 Minutes*, "Frankly, I lie in bed sometimes at night and it . . . just scares me, the level of corruption we may have in Florida."

Terrorists and Politics

What role does drug money play in South Florida politics? The evidence is inconclusive, but the clout of Cuban exile terrorists, some of them having narcotics connections, suggests at least an indirect influence. However, their anti-communist cover, President Reagan's support for exile causes and local politicians' awareness of the importance of the Hispanic vote (38 percent of the electorate in Miami) have obscured the extent of the terrorists' penetration.

That Reagan is perceived as the Cuban exiles' friend in Washington came up in a rather odd context in the recent Miami mayoral race. The Democratic candidate, incumbent Maurice Ferre, appealed to blacks and Anglos by telling them that a vote for his opponent, Xavier Suarez, would enable Reagan to "take control" of Miami. Suarez is a Cuban exile.

Ferre is of Puerto Rican descent and is supposedly unsympathetic to the Cubans, but even he finds it expedient to appeal to the Cuban terrorists who wield power in Little Havana. Re-elected to his sixth term, Ferre calls the influence of terrorists in Miami politics "unavoidable." "It just happens to be part of political life," he told *The Herald*.

Last year, the Mayor led a delegation to Venezuela to request the release of Orlando Bosch, who was being held in a Caracas jail, charged with participating in the Air Cubana bombing in which Monkey Morales was involved. Although Bosch is probably the most notorious terrorist in the Cuban exile community, Ferre reasoned that associating with him would be popular with the exiles.

Nor did Ferre have any compunction about associating with Letelier hit-squad member Guillermo Novo in a campaign to raise funds for Bosch's release. Novo was one of eight terrorists listed on the campaign's official letterhead; all have been indicted and some, like Novo, have drug connections. Not to be outdone, Suarez dipped into his campaign

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treasury to contribute to the legal defense fund of Eduardo Arocena, the alleged leader of Omega 7. In providing such support, said Arthur Nehrbass, head of the Dade County Organized Crime Bureau, politicians enhance the terrorists' stature in Miami. "Respectability is an important weapon in the terrorists' arsenal," he told *The Herald*.

Last year, Miami City Commissioner Demetrio Perez proposed a plan to honor a Cuban terrorist who was killed in Paris when a bomb he was assembling exploded. In 1982 the terrorist organization Alpha 66 gained respectability when the Miami City Commission gave it a $10,000 grant to arrange temporary housing for the Mariel refugees. Ferre defended the grant, saying that Alpha 66 had "never been accused of terrorist activities inside the United States." Former Acting Chief of Police Adam Klimkowski said in *The Herald* that Ferre told him he had heard "quite a bit [about] bombings coming up" in the Miami area but refused to provide any details. "I was flat irritated," Klimkowski said. "Here the Mayor was saying he had information [on terrorism], and he wouldn't divulge it to me."

The career of former City Commissioner Manolo Reboso illustrates the shadowy line between politics and crime in Miami. The son of Batista's military attaché in Washington, Reboso was an intelligence officer in the Bay of Pigs operation and later represented the Miami interests of Nicaragua's Somoza dictatorship. He also had business ties with the Miami-based World Finance Corporation (W.F.C.), which laundered proceeds from drug sales. One of his principal campaign fund-raisers was later indicted for embezzling from a Texas bank that was a subsidiary of W.F.C. In 1981 Reboso ran for mayor amid accusations by Monkey Morales —never proved—that drug traffickers were financing his campaign. Like Ferre, Reboso defended the city's patriot terrorists when he was City Commissioner.

In late 1983 officials of a Venezuelan government bank charged that Reboso had failed to account for more than $9 million of the $36.5 million it had loaned him to construct a Miami high-rise which was to have housed the bank's offices. The deal had all the markings of a Miami scam, including offshore front companies and a cooperative banker, who actively pushed Reboso's requests for unsecured loans. The claim was eventually settled out of court.

Bank Laundromats

If the role of drug money in politics is murky, it is well documented in the banking industry. Miami is the Wall Street of the United States' $80 billion drug traffic. There are more than a hundred banks in the city representing two dozen countries. The most prestigious banking address is Brickell Avenue, a block from Biscayne Bay, where gold-and-black skyscrapers rise incongruously above the palm trees. Coral Gables, where a hundred multinational corporations have their Latin America headquarters, is also considered a chic location. Architecture tends to reflect management style: Citibank's Miami headquarters is housed in a sleek glass building embellished with ultramodern chandeliers; Credit Suisse's offices gleam with chrome and mirrors. In contrast, the Republic National Bank, which is owned by Cuban exiles, operates out of an old-fashioned structure decorated with middlebrow Latin American art. Then there are the fly-by-night operations, some of which look like converted hamburger stands. The initial capitalization needed to obtain a bank charter in Miami is only $1.5 million (in a similar-size Ohio city, say, it can be as much as $5 million). If a bank attracts even a small fraction of the $4 billion deposited by Latin Americans each year, the profits are enormous.

When bankers know that money is hot, they accept it only for deposit in non-interest-bearing accounts, or change it into cashier's checks, which usually aren't returned to the bank for collection for months, providing another pool of interest-free funds. Some banks launder drug money on a regular basis, earning up to 3 percent in commissions on it and lending it out at a fat profit as well.

Unprofitable banks are easily sold; buyers, usually foreigners, are willing to pay two to three times the real value of a bank simply because it has a Florida charter. The smaller the bank, the more dubious the buyers it is likely to attract. "In Miami they have a saying in Spanish: 'The sharks are on the streets, not in the sea,'" said Richard H. Dailey, president of the small Dadeland Bank, who started his career in California. "You wouldn't believe how many people come in here to ask if the bank is for sale. This would never happen in San Francisco."

"We used to have the same problem," agreed Aristides Sastre, president of Republic National Bank, "but it's become less prevalent because we've grown so much. I don't know anywhere else in the United States where people just walk in off the street and offer to buy the bank."

In addition to foreign and locally controlled banks, Miami has forty-two Edge Act corporations (foreign and out-of-state bank subsidiaries that deal exclusively in over-

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seas transactions) and another forty-eight foreign bank agencies and representatives. Indeed, banks in Miami are more plentiful than supermarkets—one to a block. The out-of-state and foreign bankers claim that their institutions have been attracted to South Florida by the area's explosive growth, its Latin American trade or the need to service customers like the multinational corporations in Coral Gables. But according to a Treasury Department report, at least a third of the banks in Miami are drawn by the huge profits to be made from laundering drug money. As many as forty banks have neglected to report cash deposits of $10,000 or more, as required by law. The majority of those are small banks, known to cops and crooks as Coin-O-Washers. At least four such banks are controlled by drug dealers, according to local and Federal law enforcement officials. The advent in 1981 of international banking facilities in Florida, subsidiaries which operate under less stringent controls than their parent banks, has contributed to the free-for-all. Predicted a senior bank official in New York City at the time: "It's going to be the biggest laundering game in history."

Because retail sales of marijuana, heroin and cocaine are made on the street, dealers amass large numbers of small bills. The banks feed bales of them into high-speed money counters or simply weigh them (300 pounds of $20 bills equals $3.6 million). A common sight in Miami banks is a Latin lugging several shopping bags crammed with cash to a teller's window. Professional middlemen prefer to deliver cardboard boxes of cash to a bank's back door. If there are any questions, the courier will often abandon the money. When a Miami teller asked a woman why the money she carried in a shopping bag had a fishy odor, she dropped it and fled, leaving behind $200,000.

While the Federal government has tightened bank reporting regulations for large cash transactions and has arrested a half-dozen Miami bankers, laundering operations still flourish. Since the drug boom began, the Florida banking system has consistently registered staggering annual surpluses of cash—on average, $6 billion to $8 billion a year—more than twice the surplus cash reported by banks in the rest of the country. Financial experts calculate that more than half the Florida surplus is hot money.

Customs officials say the banks have been more cooperative in recent years. But William von Raab, U.S. Commissioner of Customs, told *The New York Times* that in 1981, Florida banks did not report $3.2 billion in cash transactions, evidence of "flagrant violations by some of the employees of many of the institutions and even by some of the institutions themselves." The practice declined briefly in 1980, after Senator William Proxmire came down hard on the banks during hearings that summer on drug-money laundering before his Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs. "But now we're back to pre-Proxmire levels," claimed an undercover agent who worked on a Miami F.B.I. sting in which the agents posed as middlemen in a laundering operation. "The bankers were delighted to deal with me when I was 'dirty,'" she continued. "Bank guards were always willing to carry crates of money into a back room with counting machines. Cash reporting requirements never hindered banks, since they could afford to pay the fines if caught."

Every Florida banker will swear his bank is clean, but as Miami banker Anthony Infante told Proxmire's committee, "Without banks . . . it would be almost impossible that these transactions would continue to happen." Infante said, "It is extremely difficult for a professional banker not to be aware of the way in which drug traffickers try to use our institutions to facilitate their illegal transactions. In twenty years as a bank officer in Florida, I have seen very few cases in which cash deposits of any substantial amount are necessary in the normal transactions of a customer."

Infante said that bankers must go beyond "the letter of the law" to solicit information about customers. In his testimony Rudolph Giuliani, a former U.S. Associate Attorney General who helped Chemical Bank stop drug-money laundering at its branches, agreed: "The law places the responsibility on banks to obtain and report [information] concerning domestic and foreign transactions." Giuliani said he found that many bank employees were ignorant of cash reporting regulations and that ignorance led to negligence—or worse. He urged closer scrutiny of customers. "Among the problems I've seen is that there were accounts maintained for drug traffickers and for others who were engaged in illegal activities under phony corporate names, and a simple visit to the business entity, the address that was given when the account was opened, would have revealed the fact that there was no such business in that location."

But many Miami bankers assert that it's none of their business where the money comes from. They apparently do not realize how seriously connections with criminals can damage an institution's reputation. "There is no doubt . . . that if the drug situation continues, the decent and respectable members of our community will eventually leave the

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area," Infante warned, "thereby damaging the image that Miami has been for so long trying to build as an international banking center." Alexander McW. Wolfe Jr., vice chairman of Florida's giant Southeast Bank, told me, "People will not take this place seriously as an international banking center until this hanky-panky stops."

Southeast ought to know. When confronted by the committee's evidence that a major Colombian drug-money launderer kept large deposits in his bank, president David A. Wollard sheepishly admitted that he had no information on the man. "I honestly read more about it in the paper than anyplace else," he explained. When asked whether putting some bankers behind bars would encourage their brethren to obey the law, he replied, "I can see where that would greatly stiffen the resolve of all banking officials to comply."

But no Florida banker has received a prison sentence, possibly because, as one frustrated bank regulator told me, juries "always seem to think that if the guy wears a three-piece suit, he can't be guilty of any serious crime." The Proxmire hearings and studies by the G.A.O. show that most bankers believe they risk a slap on the wrist, at worst, since regulatory agencies are unable or unwilling to stop the banks from laundering drug money.

The Absent Regulators

The Bank Secrecy Act of 1970 gave regulators a powerful tool for uncovering illegal banking transactions, but according to the G.A.O., they have not used it. The act requires banks to provide the Treasury Department with information on the depositor for cash transactions of $10,000 or more, except in the case of a customer that has a large cash flow, for example, a big department store. The information is supposed to be filed within fifteen days of the deposit. Transfers of $10,000 or more to foreign banks must also be reported. The G.A.O. found that a significant number of banks ignore those requirements. Some that do comply delay their reports for as long as two months after the transaction; by that time it is too late to take action. Few of the banks surveyed by the G.A.O. claimed that the reporting requirements were onerous, so excessive paperwork is no excuse for their failure to follow the law.

According to an employee of the state banking regulatory agency, most of the reports that are filed gather dust at the Treasury Department because "nobody knows what to do with them." The G.A.O. confirmed that few law enforcement agencies use the reports and blamed Treasury for failing to encourage their distribution. The Proxmire hearings revealed that divisions of the Treasury Department, including the I.R.S. and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, hide information from one another and from state banking regulators, the Customs Service and the D.E.A. Robert Serino, director of enforcement in the Comptroller's office, told the committee that "bank secrecy" prevents regulators from disclosing suspicious information, no matter how general, to any other agency. Given the regulators' "dismal" record on reporting cash transactions, said Senator Proxmire, it looks as though the

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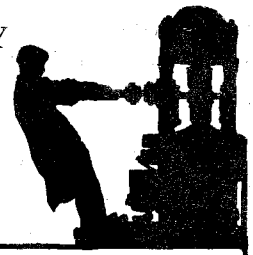

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regulators use bank secrecy to protect violators. Paul Homan, then deputy comptroller in the Comptroller's office, told the Proxmire committee that regulators are not zealous in cracking down on laundering by the banks because drug-money deposits have no effect on a bank's "financial safety and soundness." According to Homan, "So long as the bank invests those deposits in overnight money and is able to cover when the deposits are withdrawn, there is no financial threat to the bank other than the peripheral one of perhaps affecting the confidence that people have in it, because of known associations with criminals." In other words, the fact that a bank does business with criminals, or is owned by them, is of minor importance to the overseers of the nation's banks.

Unable to prod bank regulators into action, the enforcement division of the Treasury Department has initiated a series of joint task forces in conjunction with the Justice Department, using reports filed in accordance with the Bank Secrecy Act to identify individuals and organizations involved in laundering drug money. Modest in scope and relatively new, those operations mark the first successful attempt to take the profits out of drug trafficking. They have also provided an education in how money is laundered.

Isaac Kattan, the Colombian drug-money launderer apprehended by Operation Greenback, ran a sizable operation in Miami. (Kattan was given thirty years in prison for cocaine trafficking, one of the few harsh sentences received by a Florida dealer.) Although he dealt in hundreds of millions of dollars, Kattan's methods were crude compared with those of the top dealers. As go-between for Colombian drug suppliers and U.S. buyers, Kattan received instructions, usually by telephone, to pick up payments for drugs in Miami parking lots, restaurants, alleys and even on busy Biscayne Boulevard. He and his Latin helpers lugged the cash to his apartment, which was equipped with five counting machines, a computer and a telex. When the money had been sorted and stacked neatly in cardboard boxes, Kattan took it to one of his friendly Miami banks for deposit, using a currency-exchange business run by his Miami travel agency as a cover. The money was either telexed from the bank to a Colombian currency-exchange house or was sent on a more roundabout route through a brokerage firm or real estate operation. When the dollars arrived in Colombia, the exchange house converted them to pesos, usually on the black market. For those services Kattan, like other middlemen in the drug trade, collected a stiff fee. Task force agents estimated that Kattan's Swiss bank account stash was worth more than $100 million.

Since it is the source of three-quarters of the cocaine and marijuana entering the United States, Colombia plays a key role in laundering. The principal exchange houses used for that purpose there are located in Barranquilla (marijuana), a coastal town on the Caribbean, and Medellín (cocaine), the second largest city. The more sophisticated operations include a network of offshore banks in Panama, the Bahamas and the Cayman Islands, as well as dummy companies incorporated in Panama and the Netherlands Antilles. The idea is to create so many zigs and zags of intermediary stops that it is virtually impossible to trace the paper trail out of, and often back into, the United States. Kattan got caught because he made only perfunctory attempts to hide his trail. He often carried boxes of cash to the bank, and he broke a cardinal rule of money launderers by dealing dope. But he made his biggest mistake by relying on the discretion of the Miami office of the brokerage firm Donaldson, Lufkin and Jenrette, which alerted the D.E.A. that suspiciously large amounts of money were moving through one of its accounts.

Smelly Money

That firm's scruples contrasted sharply with those of four Miami banks with which Kattan also did business: Great American Bank, the Bank of Miami, Northside Bank of Miami and the Popular Bank and Trust Company. When Federal agents raided the Bank of Miami in 1981, they found that bank employees had been switching funds from one of Kattan's accounts to another. According to the investigators, Kattan and members of his organization regularly hauled huge sums of money to the Bank of Miami and the Great American Bank ($60 million to the latter in just over a year). In an affidavit, an agent testified that he once heard Kattan apologize to Great American Bank official Carlos Nuñez for a suspicious-looking transaction. "Don't worry—the main thing now is to count the money," Nuñez assured him.

During a concurrent raid on the Great American Bank, agents found a number of other irregularities, according to court documents. An article in the July 20, 1981, *Newsweek* summed up their discoveries:

> Large cash deposits were sometimes taken to the bank's installment-loan department . . . and the depositors would be given a cashier's check; the cash was then logged in as the bank's own money. Pages of the cash-deposit log and some cashier's checks were missing. When questioned about the practice, Nuñez said that a bank vice president, Lionel Paytuby, had approved the procedure as a favor to special customers. One bank employee told authorities that Latins bearing cardboard boxes arrived almost daily at the bank. Agents said that bank employees assigned to count the money sometimes complained that the bills were wet or smelly—as if they had been buried.

While bank officials complained that the task force raiders had "descended on the bank en masse like storm troopers," there was a hollowness to the complaint. Before the raid, the Bank of Miami had been identified by a Treasury Department report as an institution frequently used by drug dealers to launder their cash. As for the Great American Bank, it was again in the news in late 1982 when Paytuby and three other bankers were arrested by the D.E.A. on charges of operating a giant laundering operation, which involved forty-one domestic and five foreign bank accounts. The bank was charged with laundering $94 million in dope profits over a fourteen-month period. The twenty-one-count indictment marks the first time a South Florida bank has been charged with laundering; if convicted the bank could be fined up to $6.1 million. John Walker, the Treasury Department's chief of enforcement, told reporters the

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Robert Coles on INTELLECTUALS

For many years, as I have worked, trying to understand how all sorts of families make do, often against considerable odds, I have written articles and books for interested fellow citizens. Soon enough, I have received the expected responses. But on one score I confess to perplexity, even alarm — an absence, almost total, of reaction when it comes to an entire side of my work. I refer to the descriptions I've rendered of the religious thoughts and feelings of the children and adults I've come to know.

All I need do, it seems, is come up with a social conclusion, make a psychological generalization, attempt a literary analysis, try portraying a certain kind of personal or regional life, and there are thoughtful (appreciatively or reprovingly so) correspondents willing to share their evaluations publicly. But when I have tried to describe how, say, an old Spanish-speaking woman from northern New Mexico, or a Southern black child, or an Appalachian white child, or a small-town working-class man happen to feel about Jesus and His words and deeds, then the result is either the silence already mentioned, or rarely, a puzzled, frustrated truculence: "I don't see why you get yourself into all that religious talk! If you're trying to prove that people are superstitious, or need a crutch, then a page is enough, not a chapter or half a book!"

In my own case, the attention given religious faith is held even more suspect because I'm a psychiatrist — and so, presumably, "educated" and "perceptive" enough (so I was told in another friendly letter!) to "know better"! I should be what an intellectual ought to be — someone who analyzes how others think and feel, who gives reasons for one or another moment of history. The civil rights struggle, for instance: I ought have kept my mind on the various "variables" that prompted it.

Meanwhile, there is this young man from Birmingham, Alabama, speaking in 1965: "I don't know why I said no to segregation. I'm just another white Southerner, and I wasn't brought up to love integration! But I was brought up to love Jesus Christ, and when I saw the police of this city use dogs on people, I asked myself what Jesus would have done — and that's all I know about how I came to be here, on the firing line!"

Intellectuals also need to document how people's beliefs prompt them to live their lives. And I fear that when I started doing that I learned something about myself and my kind — how arrogant and self-centered we risk becoming: interested in our own heady assertions, and anxious to be the spokespersons for all those others, who don't write and teach and come up with new ideas, but who rather, try to go from one day to the next, and who yes, in large numbers indeed, keep calling on Jesus, not the intellectuals, for guidance. —from the June 1982 NEW OXFORD REVIEW.

If you are interested in exploring the beliefs behind the "data" — in probing the deeper religious feelings embedded in our lives, however much we try to ignore them — if you want to *understand* what moves a Martin Luther King Jr., a Lech Walesa, an Archbishop Romero, a Mother Teresa, a Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Polish Pope, a Simone Weil, a Dorothy Day, a George Orwell, then you're ready to look into the NEW OXFORD REVIEW. We are spearheading the renewed interest among today's intellectuals in what Daniel Bell terms "the sacred." Robert Coles writes a regular column called "Harvard Diary," and like him, our writers — Juli Loesch, John C. Cort, J.M. Cameron, Arthur F. McGovern, Dale Vree, and others — express themselves with clarity, verve, style, and "heart." Published monthly, we have been praised by *Newsweek* for being "thoughtful," and the *Library Journal* predicts we will "doubtless command increasing attention."

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Great American Bank was indicted because it had consistently failed to fulfill currency reporting requirements and that this failure "wasn't due to the actions of an isolated employee but was, in fact, a bank practice."

Cashier's checks are probably used most commonly in money-laundering transactions. They are safer to carry than cash and harder to trace than ordinary checks, because they do not have to bear the payee's name and address. The checks frequently change hands eight or nine times before returning to the bank, and they are common currency on the black markets of drug-producing countries. According to bankers, any bank that has more than 3 percent of its deposits in such checks is likely to be engaged in a laundering operation. In 1980, according to the Proxmire committee's report, two dozen Miami banks held a higher percentage.

Not coincidentally, many Florida banks implicated in the drug traffic are controlled by Latins. While some have unblemished reputations, more than a third of the twenty-one South Florida banks owned by Latins have been suspected of laundering by U.S. authorities. One such is Continental National Bank, founded in 1974, the first Miami bank to be owned and managed entirely by Cuban exiles.

The first indication that Continental was accepting large dope-money deposits came in 1978, when the Customs Service and the Treasury Department uncovered a laundering operation run by a well-known Colombian narcotics dealer, Arturo Fernández, who worked with Isaac Kattan. Eight banks were involved, but the largest portion of the money—$95 million—had been deposited in Continental. Fernández had made most of his early transactions with the Bank of Miami and the Canadian Royal Trust Bank of Miami, but when Orlando Arrebola, a Bank of Miami official who knew Fernández, moved to Continental as a vice president, Fernández switched most of his accounts to that bank. There, according to government investigators, he usually dealt with Arrebola. The banker was charged with laundering drug money but was acquitted when a Miami jury ruled that tape recordings of Arrebola's conversations with undercover F.B.I. agents were insufficient proof of his involvement in a conspiracy. The undercover agents claimed that Arrebola had helped them open an account at Continental and had counseled them on laundering money. According to Arrebola's attorney, the banker may have had reason to suspect that drugs were the source of the money pouring into Continental, but the government's case fell far short of proving anything more than that. "His intent was merely to do his job well at his bank; his intent was to further the business of the bank," the lawyer claimed in *The Herald*, although he admitted that Arrebola's actions might have "helped the conspiracy along."

There appears to be some truth in the lawyer's contention that Arrebola was just doing his job. In a 1978 report to the Comptroller of the Currency, a Florida bank examiner said he had informed Continental's management that even if the bank "is in compliance with the reporting regulations, some of the transactions may involve the laundering of illicit moneys," and he went on to cite thirty-four such cases. But, said the examiner, Continental's management "does not intend to discourage" such transactions "since a fee is levied for the handling of these deposits."

As any banker will point out, it is management's responsibility to see that employees comply with the law. Bankers also admit that compliance involves more than filling out forms; it means that the banks must not engage in activities that the law is intended to prevent. But Continental's vice chairman, Bernardo Benes, told NBC News that it is enough to fulfill the letter of the law: "It's not really up to bankers to become investigators of customers."

More than carelessness or complacency is to blame for that attitude. Senator Proxmire's statement four years ago still holds true: "Many banks are addicted to drug money, just as millions of Americans are addicted to drugs."

A Mirror of the United States

Driving northwest through the Everglades on Highway 41, one feels a great sense of relief at having escaped the gaudy, violent world of Miami. Midway to Naples, there's a gas station with a ham-and-eggs joint that caters to the redneck trade and identifies itself as a checkpoint on the border between alien South Florida and the rest of the country. A sign on the wall announces, "Will the last American leaving South Florida please bring the flag!"

But Miami is as much a reflection of the United States as it is an extension of Latin America. Without the social acceptance that has made organized crime the biggest industry in the United States, gangsters like Lansky and Trafficante could not have flourished in Miami. Unfortunately, there is no quick fix for the evils generated by the Miami connection. Moral leadership is lacking in a nation that accepts and even admires Mafia godfathers, and whose President has unleashed C.I.A.-backed *contras* against Nicaragua's revolution just as the Kennedy Administration encouraged anti-Castro *contras* in the early 1960s—some of whom sit atop Miami's big candy mountain of drug money.

Remedial action can be taken in certain areas—enforcing the laws against bank laundering of drug money, for example. But the C.I.A.-mob-narcotics connection will not be broken by this Administration.

Would a Democratic Administration change things? Not likely. The party has proved itself as myopic as the Republicans when it comes to understanding the social and economic roots of pervasive drug use in America. Latin Americans, at least, are less hypocritical about it. As the Colombians say, cocaine is good for the economy. Many Miamians would agree, in private.

The response from Washington has been and will probably continue to be "political posturing," in the words of Lester Wolff, former chairman of the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control. The Federal government has "declared so many wars on drugs," Wolff said, "that if we lost that many wars, the United States wouldn't be around." Perhaps the loss of all those wars against drugs has deeper implications than we realize. Have so many principles been sacrificed to greed and *Realpolitik* that the nation is in spiritual ruin? It is a question few Americans care to ask. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

'Quanta, Amy said, on the train...'

GARY GIDDINS

PITCH DARK. *By Renata Adler. Alfred A. Knopf. 144 pp. $12.95.*

About fifteen pages into *Pitch Dark*, Renata Adler's narrator, Kate, finally sustains a vignette longer than a paragraph or two. It's about a dying raccoon she finds in her house one night. She calls the wildlife commissioner, an elderly man who leaves his television set to come and take the animal away. How much does she owe him? "'Well, ma'am, I work for the town,' he said. 'Whatever you think is appropriate.' He put the bill in the pocket of his shirt." When he's gone, she assumes that he will kill the animal with sadistic indifference.

The episode underscores a few of the shortcomings of this tiresome, foolish second novel. First, for all the vividness of her anecdotal eye, Adler has no respect for character, no sense of what needs and doesn't need to be told: it hardly requires a Tolstoy to recognize the importance of specifying the precise value of that bill. Second, although Kate's decision to juggle the index cards of her life into a book is animated by her inexplicable love for Jake, an aging, married lawyer, she has less to say about him than about the raccoon. Third, Kate appends many morals to the story—she mistook the critter's illness for trust; she betrayed the putative trust; "We traveled a bit along life's road together"—but it remains one of many Creative Writing conceits loosely shuffled into the deck. Fourth, Kate's unwarranted assumption about the wildlife commissioner's cruelty typifies the bullying meanness with which she dispatches everyone. Such an unappealing cast, such a disreputable narrator.

Misanthropy is as legitimate a motive for writing fiction as any other, and there are passages in *Pitch Dark* that reminded me of Katherine Anne Porter in their unblinking severity. Porter, however, was first and last a storyteller, and she made her case by adhering to a Flaubertian obsession with getting things right. Adler can't be bothered with specifics. She wants something more, a mood; she arrives at something less, a sentimental accretion of generalizations, trivia, in-jokes, newspaper items, anecdotes and disquisitions (some clever, others sophomoric) on Homer, football, euthanasia, libel cases, newspaper bylines and computerized typewriters. She writes reminders to herself like "Hey, wait" and "Look here, you know, look here."

Kate is fretfully trying to put in focus her six-year love affair with Jake. She compiles scribblings and scraps of conversation as if the smoke rising from those ashes will compensate for the absence of narrative fire. The result is an adult's version of the kind of diary Kate wrote as a girl: "There were no events, few names, no facts, no indication whatever of what *happened*, apart from this gloom, that cheering up, this gloom again." Jake is a cipher, and Kate offers not a clue as to why she is devoted to him or why the reader should care if she leaves him or not. Is he loving, attentive, attractive, good in bed? We see only that he is manipulative, petty, disingenuous and grasping. He's about to celebrate his thirty-fifth wedding anniversary; he drinks. But then, Kate's no prize either.

In lieu of having a breakdown (assuming the novel itself doesn't embody one, like Salinger's "Seymour: An Introduction," which, come to think of it, *Pitch Dark* resembles), Kate flies to Ireland for a rest. Her assessment of the Irish is despicable. It begins: "An occasional creature of great poetry and beauty; the others, suspicious, crafty, greedy, stubborn, incurious, stupid, devious, violent, and cruel." Punctuated by infuriating non sequiturs and notes to herself, this thesis is developed for the entire middle section of the novel. I assume the reader is meant to identify with Kate, but it's difficult to be sure. Kate is an extremely paranoid woman who drives on the wrong side of the road, smacks a truck, abandons a rented car, sneaks out on her host and needlessly lies to everyone she meets, even a "providential" cabdriver; yet she can't understand why the natives are suspicious of her. She mentions, almost gloatingly, a woman who neglects to flush the toilet—a phenomenon Kate has apparently never encountered in the United States. These passages read like the revenge of a disgruntled tourist, but they are only the most obvious examples of a xenophobic elitism that also leaps at the bastardized English of an immigrant cabby and a sushi chef. Kate scrutinizes everyone in her life, past and present, friends and strangers, for blemishes. There are so many pimples we never see a face.

Adler adds her own twist to the vogue for true-life novels. Hoping to flee Ireland unrecognized (it's never clear exactly why), Kate decides to use a different name, but "one as like my own as possible." She comes up with Alder. In the raccoon scene, however, we learned that Kate's last name is Ennis. The discrepancy is never explained. Other omissions are more annoying. Much of *Pitch Dark* is structured like a mystery. The writer's notes are clues, memory aids, relating to incidents that, when finally revealed, will presumably enlighten Kate and the reader. We get pages and pages of refrains on the order of "Quanta, Amy said, on the train, in that blizzard, in answer to my question, Quanta." And so, trusting fools, we read on, waiting to find out who Amy is and what she meant and why they were on a train in a blizzard. But the answers are less than compelling, and we recognize before long that we've been strung along by yet another example of Creative Writing. Many loose ends are never tied up at all. There's a lot of talk about libel suits, for example, beginning with an obvious reference to Lillian Hellman, whose "special circle" comes to represent for Kate "one of the most important cultural manifestations of its time," and proceeding with hints about a suit Kate won. We never learn a thing about Hellman's cultural manifestation or Kate's suit. No ideas or ramifications or even facts are allowed to interrupt the nervously fussy mood of privileged melancholy.

There are acute and bristling paragraphs here and there—lucid elaborations of stealth and guilt in the Irish countryside, piquant generalizations about men and women. One of the best of these comes early and begins: "Sometimes he loved her, sometimes he

Gary Giddins is the author of Riding on a Blue Note *(Oxford University Press). He writes about jazz and fiction for* The Village Voice.

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Chief among them was Walter Paepcke, a master of the art of combining ideals and public relations. He was instrumental in establishing Lázló Moholy-Nagy's School of Design in Chicago. He helped expand the Great Books Program. With Robert Hutchins, he organized the Goethe Bicentennial Festival in Aspen in 1949 from which grew the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies. Allen recalls the excitement of this time when the relationship between culture and commerce was imbued with vision and idealism.

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was just amused and touched by the degree to which she loved him. Sometimes he was bored by her love and felt it as a burden. Sometimes his sense of himself was enhanced, sometimes diminished by it. But he had come to take the extent of her love as given, and, as such, he lost interest in it." These are disquieting passages because in them you sense Adler's potential to write a brave novel about the way people come together and fall apart. But she's opted for cleverness and subterfuge and sentiment and mood. At one point Kate dismisses Gertrude Stein as sentimental and unreadable, but she might have been describing her own novel, with its assorted tender buttons that nag and mystify. "You are the nearest thing to a real story to happen in my life," Kate persistently writes of Jake, but instead of shedding light on that story, Adler/Alder goes around unscrewing all the bulbs, leaving the page pitch dark. □

THEATER.

ELLIOTT SIRKIN

The Real Thing
Noises Off
Isn't It Romantic
Baby With the Bathwater

This season, the choice in New York theater seems to be between plays that plunder the past for diverting old genres that have lost their meaning and plays that reflect some aspect of the present but are finally as ugly and mean as the streets outside. Broadway's hit British imports, Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing* and Michael Frayn's *Noises Off*, have their hearts and roots in the past as surely as last year's ragged and charmless revival of *You Can't Take It With You*. Yet while there is a certain dynamic contemporaneity in the work of two young Off Broadway playwrights, Christopher Durang and Wendy Wasserstein, it is contemporary in a way no one would want anything or anyone to be.

Although watching *The Real Thing* sometimes feels like participating in an archaeological dig, it has its pleasures. A comedy of manners about love among London's show-business elite, *The Real Thing* belongs to an old, old tradition of smart British plays in which a smug and egotistical worldling is reformed by love while everyone drinks fashionable cocktails. The first act is barely ten minutes old before the characters are sipping champagne and orange juice—a reminder that, although Tom Stoppard may be the author of many famous philosophical debates dressed up as avant-garde plays (*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Jumpers*, *Travesties*), he is also a passionate devotee of Noel Coward.

Coward's forged fingerprints are all over *The Real Thing*. The hand-on-hip swank just may be the reason for the play's immediate success—the day after it opened, the box office sold a walloping 6,000 tickets. Stoppard certainly seems to have enjoyed composing the long passages of snide one-up badinage: HE (testily): "It's a little early in the day for all this." SHE (acidly): "No, darling, it's a little late." By installing this mannered bitchiness in the mouths of characters who are a playwright and his actress wife, Stoppard may be making a point about the impact of dramatic traditions on the personal style of theater people, but the only reality it refers to is the ghostly reality of theater history.

The humor, though, is not what dates *The Real Thing* so oddly. Relieved of its references to nuclear missiles, teen-age promiscuity and television plays, the plot is the very skeleton on which countless dressy, genteelly commercial, middlebrow plays used to hang. In the course of the story, Henry, the playwright-hero, a clever, endearing man of the world, leaves his blasé wife, Charlotte, for Annie, a politically committed free spirit. The new marriage founders on the rocks of Henry's cold intellectuality (in this type of play, is there any other kind?), until he finally humbles himself and performs a few sacrifices in Annie's behalf, compromising his views on the sanctity of art and renovating a terrible propaganda play by Annie's convict friend; he also loosens his strict romantic ideas about monogamy, and forgives an infidelity. In effect, the theme of unselfishness rewarded among the smart set puts *The Real Thing* in the same league as those old plays where a dandy in a dressing gown or a beauty in crinolines learns an edifying moral lesson and then goes on to become a happier dandy or beauty. One thinks of Philip Barry's *The Philadelphia Story*

Elliott Sirkin has written about the arts for Ballet Review, The Atlantic, The New York Times *and* Newsday.

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(1939) and Rachel Crothers's *Susan and God* (1937), in which a spoiled and glamorous Gertrude Lawrence surrendered her trendy mystical *idées fixes* and found happiness succoring her long-suffering husband and neglected daughter. "You may have all the answers," someone says to smug Henry. "But life's about messy bits of good and bad luck, and people caring, and not necessarily having all the answers." This homely message, polished to an elegant *House & Garden* sheen, is the essence of *The Real Thing*'s meaning and appeal.

I'm simplifying, of course. Tom Stoppard is a subtle, astute, complicated writer, and obviously Rachel Crothers or Noel Coward couldn't have written Henry's second-act speech on the respect due to words ("If you get the right ones in the right order, you can nudge the world a little or make a poem which children will speak for you when you're dead"). But as acted on Broadway, in a deluxe Mike Nichols production that tends to exploit the obvious, little of the play's effect is subtle. In England, I'm told, the sets were unremarkable; here the play has the sumptuous look of a Christmas catalog, with probably the most opulent piece of décor being Jeremy Irons. Irons, who played Charles in *Brideshead Revisited*, plays Henry mostly for bright, insolent swank. Henry is so style-conscious that he loathes the convict's play less for its philistine propaganda than for its dreadful dialogue.

The suave virtuosity of Nichols's production buries some of the darker implications of the script, most notably the suggestion that Annie is really a younger version of Charlotte, Henry's cynical first wife. For Charlotte, the director has cast Christine Baranski, a metallic actress in the long and weary tradition of Broadway bitches. But Annie is played by Glenn Close in her best Cinderella-before-the-ball style, dressed up in roguish Diane Keaton finery. From a commercial standpoint, all of this is shrewd: today, as fifty years ago, there is nothing Broadway audiences like better than watching wits and harpies and wide-eyed ingénues trade epigrams in posh surroundings. True, Nichols's handling of the more dramatic scenes has a sincerity one would have thought beyond him. At its best, the direction coaxes fugitive moments of loneliness, indignation, honest confusion and mutilated tenderness out of the text. Nonetheless, one watches the play continually hoping for a more challenging, affecting and contemporary view of its milieu.

If *The Real Thing* gives off an intense aura of *déjà vu*, the same is true of Michael Frayn's *Noises Off*, a play within a play about a mediocre troupe of actors who haplessly wander into a maelstrom of on- and offstage catastrophes, getting their arms glued to props and so on. This is hardly a new idea, but the audience seemed mad for it. Even though *Noises Off* runs two hours and forty-five minutes, only a few stray souls could be seen hobbling up the aisle before an act ended.

The most you can say for the play is that the actors, among them the angelic Dorothy Loudon as the actress who plays the maid, are mild, pleasant and retiring—qualities you don't usually find in New York, in theaters or out of them. The play itself has a certain dusty curio sweetness, but why, one wonders, was it written, when it doesn't try to update or rejuvenate the old actors-under-fire farce? As in his novel *Sweet Dreams*, Frayn's tone is nostalgic and escapist, and there isn't much in *Noises Off* that George Kelly didn't have sixty years ago in his withering suburban

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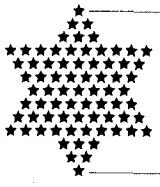

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farce, *The Torchbearers*. In both plays part of a misbegotten performance is seen from offstage. But in *The Torchbearers*—which is about a bumbling little-theater group—a husband has a heart attack from watching his wife's bad acting. The climax of the mildewed and worn *Noises Off* is nowhere near as daring.

There are, however, signs of interesting new life in the theater, and a great deal of the credit belongs to the new Off Broadway that has sprung up along Theater Row, a grisly block on West 42nd Street that you wouldn't want to walk down after midnight, but where you can see work that is, if nothing else, high-spirited and novel. The most active Theater Row organization has been Playwrights Horizons, which this season has turned up two new plays that are at least interesting—*Baby With the Bathwater* by Christopher Durang and *Isn't It Romantic* by Wendy Wasserstein. Despite their defects, the plays *feel* new; there is nothing moldy or genteel about either of them.

Written by authors still in their 30s, both present a series of hard-driving skits, most of which conclude with some kind of punch line or shock—a new dramatic shape that probably issues from the playwrights' childhood apprenticeships in front of the TV screen. This gives *Isn't It Romantic* and *Baby With the Bathwater* a compelling stop-and-go movement. Unfortunately, in both works the prevailing emotional atmosphere is one of injured self-regard and subliminally rationalized prejudice.

The playwrights have the energetic satiric bent of good college humorists, and are unmistakably present-day New Yorkers, as witness their dialogue, with its facetious mockery, its spurts of hysteria and its quotes from old show tunes. *Isn't It Romantic*, which is set in New York, has the kind of heroine the whole world thinks of as a New Yorker: Janie, a bright, plump, emotionally agitated young Jewish woman, who insults herself with sophisticated quips ("I look like an extra in *Potemkin*") and fights off a hopeless boyfriend whose family owns a chain of sit-down delis. If this ethnic waif seems less like a person than a tourist attraction, it's at least partly because she so resembles Rhoda on the old *Mary Tyler Moore Show*.

Under another name, Janie was the New England college student of Wasserstein's best-known play, *Uncommon Women and Others*. There, however, she seemed both more affecting and more plausible. Wasserstein was funny about Mount Holyoke, but in *Isn't It Romantic*, the cutting edge of her swipes at the pretensions and eccentricities of young upper-middle-class New Yorkers feels a little blunted. If she's clever enough to name an overdressed, Don Juanish executive Paul Stuart, why doesn't she do a full-scale number on pretentious haberdashers, the way she once gave it to obnoxiously ladylike Seven Sisters girls? The welcome presence of Betty Comden as Janie's mother gives rise to the thought that, with tightening and revising, the colloquial, wisecracking script might work as the libretto for a nice, old-fashioned musical along the lines of Comden and Adolph Green's *On the Town*. But even in a musical, the crucial scene where Janie's parents try to buy her love with a mink coat would probably still be pushing things a bit.

What is disturbing about *Isn't It Romantic* is its ugly reverse bigotry, which grows uglier still for being unacknowledged and probably unconscious. Janie's great epiphany occurs when she realizes her idolized East Side girlfriend Harriet is going to marry a man she isn't crazy about. This act of supposedly coldblooded practicality throws both the heroine and the playwright into a tailspin of moral superiority. But Wasserstein's animus against Harriet goes deeper than mere priggish disapproval. What *Isn't It Romantic* really dramatizes is an old racial myth: Jews are warm and emotional, and WASPs, especially on Park Avenue or Wall Street, are cold fish.

Janie is a gentle freelance contributor to *Sesame Street*; Harriet is a corporate barracuda. Janie's mother is a middle-aged flower child; Harriet's is a hard-boiled, bronzed tycoon. Love, evidently, is only a many-splendored thing if you're not a ritzy *goy*—a species *Isn't It Romantic* regards with a mixture of envy, resentment, disgust, and secret, worshipful fascination.

Whereas Wasserstein's plays have a breathless, chatty quality, Christopher Durang's could not be termed in any way conversational, unless you count as conversation the monologues unhinged and sometimes brilliant people deliver on the subway. *Baby With the Bathwater*, which closed in mid-January, doubles the aggressive venom of its predecessor, *Sister Mary Ignatius Ex-*

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plains It All for You, but it also has a lively, rough vitality. Basically, it is a brutal, knockabout portrait of the traumas endured from birth by a typical suburban boy; he is unseen by the audience until the last act, when he appears in his analyst's office wearing a dress. It's a striking moment, and Durang's explosions of undisciplined gall have a great deal of verve. But, like *Isn't It Romantic, Baby With the Bathwater* is finally not much more than a bitter private preoccupation presented as the essence of unprejudiced truth. Just as Wasserstein is obsessed with the Bourgeois Waif, Durang seems stuck on a female creature who might best be described as the Mad Gorgon. She has her deranged charms, but she can't entertain us forever.

The real surprise of *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You* was its popularity. Why should a short play that took the standard Tom Lehrer swipes at Catholic education have been such a great success—and with people who didn't know the first thing about parochial schools? The answer may be that it was not Sister Mary the ideologue who held the author and his audience in such a state of rapt horror, but Sister Mary, the female tyrant. If the complacently irrational Sister Mary didn't remind you of your sadistic camp counselor, then perhaps she was your crazy math teacher who penalized for erasures or your mother on the warpath, the unpredictable and rampaging Bad Mom so beloved of psychiatry.

For a writer of Durang's intelligence, the weaknesses of Catholic dogma could never have been much of a challenge. The damage caused by early exposure to an overbearing woman is his real subject and in *Baby With the Bathwater*, his dread of viragoes is everywhere. There is a copy of *Mommie Dearest* read from as a bedtime story, a lascivious nanny, a pompous busybody and a belligerent school principal who yells orders at her male secretary. (It can't be a coincidence that all three of these horrors were played by the stalwart Mary Louise Wilson, who also played Sister Mary for several months.) The smirking, oblique pleasure that Christopher Durang seems to take in allowing his Valkyrie trio to dominate the action and terrorize everyone in sight makes it hard not to conclude that he is, at heart, a writer who divides humanity into the humiliators and the humiliated.

What Durang doesn't seem to realize

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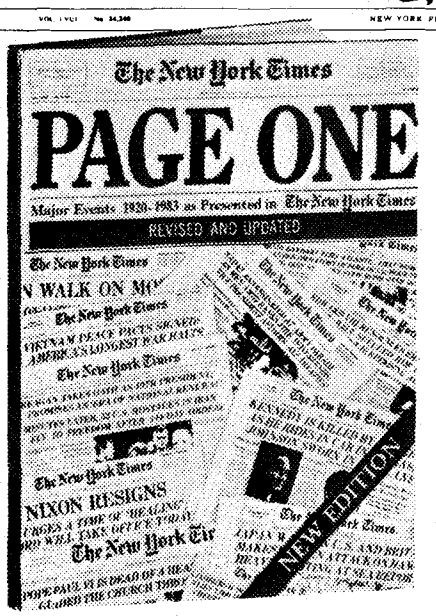

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is that, in reality, his bossy, erratic women are pitiful and confused neurotics, often as victimized as their charges, and that their quest for dominance often has an element of genuine concern. Without the *outré* comedies of Tennessee Williams, the very existence of a writer like Durang would be impossible, but when Williams created an overwhelming woman, he didn't create a psychopathic fiend—at least not always. In *The Glass Menagerie*, desperate, designing Amanda Wingfield drives her children to flight or withdrawal because she wants a better life for them that obviously will never be. Challenged, she moans, in complete sincerity, "So my devotion to my children has made me a witch."

But Durang's witches are *just* witches. He seems to believe that if only someone would chloroform these murderous shrews, we would all grow up happy, free and whole. It's us against them, and perhaps the most dramatic aspect of his renegade Catholicism is that he seems to be the only person on earth who thinks the Catholic Church is run by women.

At the end of *Isn't It Romantic*, the heroine, wearing a man's hat, dances around her apartment in what looks like an old Judy Garland routine. The point? Apparently her waif days are over, and now she will star in her own life. At the end of *Baby With the Bathwater*, the hag-ridden hero gives up his dress and has a child by a dear, shy wife. The point? Apparently he has exorcised the Mad Gorgon. Yet neither image is convincing: Wasserstein's cattiness and Durang's paranoid belligerence can't be canceled out so easily. Both plays reflect life with an uppity contempt that could trivialize and sour just about any subject, though to their credit these two playwrights never stoop to diaphragm jokes, like Tom Stoppard who, alas, does. □

GOODBYE, GOLDENEYE

Rag of black plastic, shred of a kite
caught on the telephone cable above the bay
has twisted in the wind all winter, summer, fall.

Leaves of birch and maple, brown paws of the oak
have all let go but this. Shiny black Mylar
on stem strong as fishline, the busted kite string

whipped around the wire and knotted—how long
will it cling there? Through another spring?
Long barge nudged up channel by a snorting tug,

its blunt front aproned with rot-black tires—
what is being hauled in slime-green drums?
The herring gulls that used to feed their young

on the shore—puffy, wide-beaked babies standing
spraddle-legged and crying—are not here this year.
Instead, steam shovel, bulldozer, cement mixer

rumble over sand, beginning the big new beach house.
There'll be a hotdog stand, flush toilets, trash—
plastic and glass, greasy cartons, crushed beercans,

barrels of garbage for water rats to pick through.
So, goodbye, goldeneye, and grebe and scaup and loon.
Goodbye, morning walks beside the tide tinkling

among clean pebbles, blue mussel shells and snail
shells that look like staring eyeballs. Goodbye,
kingfisher, little green, black crowned heron,

snowy egret. And, goodbye, oh faithful pair of
white swans that used to glide—god and goddess
shapes of purity—over the wide water.

May Swenson

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SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1995

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N	■	O	■	E	■	O	■	S	■	I	■	H	■	I
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M	I	G	R	A	N	T	■	O	F	F	I	C	E	■
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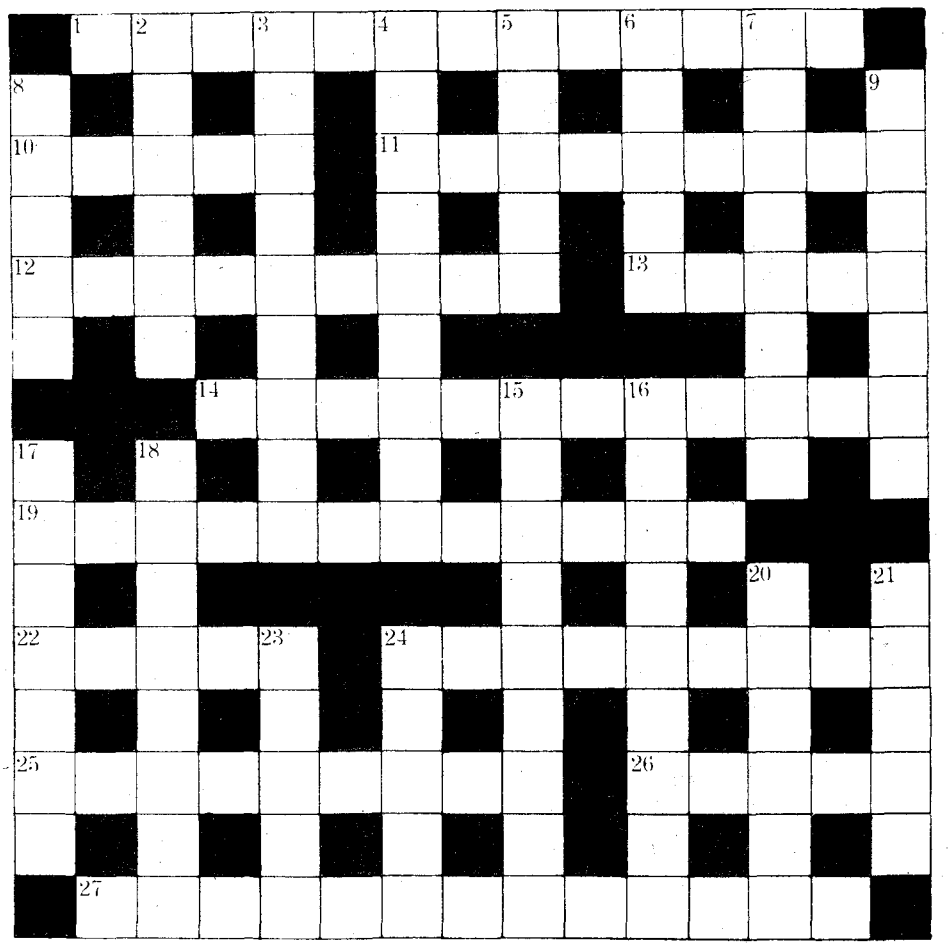
LOCAL 6 OF THE AMALGAMATED LITHOGRAPHERS OF AMERICA NEW YORK X-523

Crossword Puzzle No. 1996

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 You might find it a fair sample of chauvinistic reference to the head of the family being male! (13)
10 Proving an Indian reindeer has to have your heart. (5)
11 A different pattern on rugs, yet not an old type. (9)
12 Can anyone so shaken up prove a nuisance? (9)
13 It certainly doesn't imply a first airing. (5)
14 See 24 down
19 Would one be likely to grow up to be the India Rubber Man? (9,4)
22 Perhaps good hiding places get an absence of approval. (5)
24 What the announcer does with professional assertions? (9)
25 Not crazy—just supposedly not within view, though actually forgotten. (3,2,4)
26 No clothes on? About a thousand commonly push for it. (5)
27 Suggestion that we join the Quakers? (4,2,7)

DOWN

2 In one of the best circles they might be doing it to the cupboards. (6)
3 It might be considered no crime by the undeveloped. (9)
4 See 18
5 One invited into the garden built around you, by the sound of it. (5)
6 A large order of beer? (5)
7 A controversial aid to an athlete or a starlet? (8)
8 Just a little bit of a fight, evidently. (5)
9 Do you need a dragnet to obtain what could be conceded? (7)
15 Is the bride more upset if you make fictitious additions this way? (9)
16 Put too much weight on one end? It's a form of nub on a thing associated with the tilt. (9)
17 Leave a belt on, obviously. (7)
18 and 4 Fire next, reputedly. (3,2,3,6-3)
20 Acted in tender fashion, being so disposed. (6)
21 One might be expected to put you in your place. (6)
23 Valuable containers. (5)
24 and 14 across Novel form of biased self-esteem. (5,3,9)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

PUZZLED?

No more cross words. Find out why "little skipper" is a "truant." Send for a free copy of Frank W. Lewis's Ground Rules to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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